SPORTS / A24

Federer: It was important for me to beat Nadal

METRO / A17

San Juan bar massacre: 6 men killed, 2 wounded

WORLD / A20

Baghdad car bomb explosions, attacks kill 61 people

ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

Jennylyn Mercado denies she flirted with Jeremy Marquez

Families of 2 missing UP students air appeal

By Tj Burgonio

A GLEEFUL KAREN EMPEÑO, WHO IS TURNING 23 on July 22, excitedly told her mother by phone she would take time off from her hectic schedule at school and travel home to Masinloc, Zambales, so they could celebrate their birthdays together.

Sherlyn Cadapan, in a text to her mother who

FAMILIES/ A4

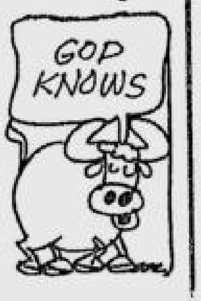
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, July 11, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 213 P18 website: www.inq7.net

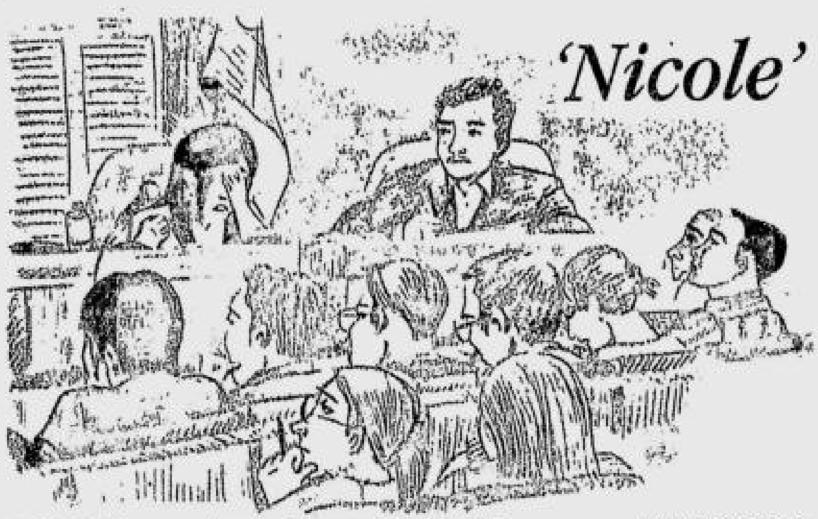
Aid, not bribes, Palace says of gifts to bishops

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY strongly disputed claims that President Macapagal-Arroyo had attempted to win bishops to her side by wining and dining them and showering them with gifts.

AID, NOT BRIBES/ A6





"NICOLE" resumes her testimony amid outbursts.

SKETCH BY STEPH BRAVO

'Nicole' strikes alleged rapist with handbag

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN AN EXPLOSION OF FURY THAT stunned spectators inside the courtroom, rape complainant "Nicole" yesterday repeatedly struck with her bag an American Marine she had accused of raping her, and then screamed at him.

The high drama occurred as the 22-year-old Filipino woman entered the courtroom to resume her testimony against Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith and three other American accused.

What provoked Nicole's outburst was not clear, but her mother claimed Smith tried to trip her daughter as she walked past him on entering the Makati courtroom.

No comment was available from Smith, but The Associated Press quoted the 21-year-old American as saying: "She kicked me on the leg."

A friend of Nicole's tried to restrain her by grabbing her waist as she repeatedly struck Smith with the shoulder bag she was holding with both hands.

Smith's security man pulled him backward. Meanwhile, Nicole had fallen and wailed helplessly on the floor, surrounded by prosecution and defense lawyers, all surprised at what happened.

Nicole's mother and brother rushed over and picked her up.

"*Sa sarili mong bayan, gagaguhin ka ... Walang respeto sa babae. Tatalapirin pa. Harapan tayo, barilan tayo* (They make a fool of you in your own country. No respect for women. On top of that, they will trip you. Let's shoot it out, face to face)," Nicole's mother said within earshot of Smith as she settled on her seat.

The incident occurred minutes before

NICOLE/ A6

CBCP shuns impeachment

Scandal inspires Italy to win World Cup

BERLIN—WITH FLASHBULBS from the 69,000 fans at the Olympic Stadium lighting up the field and over a billion people watching on televisions around the world, Italy won its fourth World Cup title after a tense penalty shootout with France.

Piazzas from Rome to Milan, and small towns in between, erupted in cheers on Sunday as Italian defender Fabio Grosso scored the decisive penalty kick. Volleys of fireworks exploded in the sky over Italian cities, the churches of Rome rang their bells, and cars adorned with green, red and white flags sped around, horns blaring.

France united in sorrow and wounded pride, with fans thronging Paris' Champs-Elysees in a collective post-match consolation party. Dismay at losing out on soccer's greatest honor was palpable—but so was satisfaction at having made it to the final at all. France had struggled to qualify for the Cup and then barely squeezed past the first round. ***(See related stories in Sports, Page A24.)***

Outplayed for an hour and into extra time, the Italians won 5-3 in a penalty shootout after France captain Zinedine Zidane was ejected in the 110th minute for a vicious head butt to the chest of Italy's Marco Materazzi.

It was the ugliest act of a tournament that set records for yellow and red cards, diving and, at times, outright brutality. And it was the last move for Zidane, who is retiring.

SCANDAL/ A8

ITALIAN defender Fabio Cannavaro holds the World Cup trophy as he celebrates with his teammates after defeating the French in a penalty shootout in their championship match at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. *(More photos on Pages A8, A9 and A24.)*

AFP

Yes, RP can kick out sorry state of football, if only ...

An I-TEAM Report
Project Editor
Fernando del Mundo

THE "FESTIVAL OF FOOTBALL" on the Ateneo de Manila University campus over the weekend began under leaden skies.

Rain soon fell, but it did not stop the action on the football fields, where some 100 teams, mostly from private schools in Metro Manila,, squared off.

In one soggy pitch, drenched boys ganged up on the ball at midfield, pummeling it helter-skelter.

Everyone seemed to be enjoying himself, but there was no apparent thought in the melee to bring the ball to the goal.

It did not appear that there was anyone in that scrimmage who had the makings of Zinedine Zidane, the son of an Algerian immigrant who took France to two World Cup finals, or David Beckham, the hugely popular England captain and husband of Spice Girl Posh.

The game reflected none of the joy and grief that football could produce in a World Cup final or a con-

YES/ A9

IT MAY be a long way to football fame in the quadrennial World Cup matches for these young Filipino players but they pursue that dream during a "Festival of Football" game on the Ateneo de Manila University campus.

REM ZAMORA

Pastoral statement stumps GMA foes

By Christian V. Esguerra

RULE OUT THE SUPport of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for the fresh bid to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In a pastoral statement, the 124-member CBCP yesterday said the present impeachment process would be an "unproductive political exercise" in determining the truth.

It said that citizens' negative perception of politicians would only deepen unless proponents and opponents of impeachment were both guided by concern for the common good.

Even so, the CBCP said it favored the search for the truth behind allegations against Ms Arroyo and that it respected "the position of individuals or groups that wish to continue using the impeachment process to arrive at the truth."

One of the CBCP members,

CBCP/ A4

AT A GLANCE

THE CBCP positions on other issues, as stated in its latest pastoral statement:

- **CHARTER CHANGE**
Will support Charter change only through constitutional convention; 2007 polls must push through.
- **ELECTORAL REFORM**
Call for resignation or prosecution of a number of Comelec commissioners should not be brushed aside; Comelec should be reformed; electoral process must be modernized.
- **EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS**
Denounces increasing number of killings of journalists and activists, and those perpetrated by insurgents against people who fail to pay revolutionary taxes, have "blood debts," etc.
- **FAMILY**
Deeply troubled by attempts to legislate or make as state policy ideas that weaken or destroy religious values on nature of life and of marriage as union of man and woman, childbearing and formation of children; continue to publicly intervene on issues about population, marriage and family, reproductive health and sex education in schools.

PDI Research

Group seeks to create new generation of patriots

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.
Metro

THIS GROUP IS PLANNING A revolution.

The members are young and idealistic, brilliant and patriotic, possibly among the best minds in the country.

They are determined to influence more and more people, hoping to speed up change and turn this nation into something "we all deserve."

The police and the administration need not freak out, however. The group does not maintain a cache of firearms or explosives. They don't have blueprints of government buildings. They are just armed with sheer academic excellence and a pure desire to serve.

The group is called the Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines Alumni Community. But don't be fooled by the first word.

The group now has more than a hundred active members, quietly striving to make a difference individually and collectively, hoping to inspire others.

"The mission of the community is to create a new generation of people who will love this country," TOSP-AC leader Pamela Gracia Asis told the INQUIRER.

The community boasts of members who have displayed excellence in various fields. There are medical board exam and bar exam topnotchers, as well as honor graduates from the best universities in the country. The late Sen. Raul Roco was an alumnus.

But the group also takes pride in having members quietly serving their own communities, like Noralyn Sharief, who exchanged her dreams of being a surgeon in big hospitals abroad to setting up schools for the poor in Mindanao.

The TOSP-AC was sired by the Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines, an annual nationwide student search, which began in 1961 as a project of businessman Jose Concepcion Jr.

The project was shelved during the martial law years, but Concepcion held on to his vision of creating a "laboratory of leaders" and resumed giving out the awards in 1989.

Schools nominate deserving students, who are screened in regional and national searches. The national committee, handled by

GROUP SEEKS/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon, Visayas and Western Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Southern Luzon and Visayas. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening

COMPILED BY KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/07/10/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Lim to meet with Gonzalez today

Señeres goes to NBI: Withdrawal not illegal

By Armand N. Nocum and Margaux C. Ortiz

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE HAS OFFERED Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim a way out of facing criminal liability for his alleged involvement in the failed coup attempt last Feb. 24.

Lim would have to turn state witness and name the brains and financiers of the failed power grab.

"But Lim would have to be formally charged for his alleged crime before he could turn state witness," Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday.

Gonzalez also disclosed that he was scheduled to have a one-on-one meeting with Lim today.

"I was informed that he would like to meet me," the justice secretary said, but declined to say why Lim had requested the meeting.

Former Ambassador Roy Señeres, meanwhile, admitted to meeting Lim last year to advise him that there was nothing illegal about withdrawing support from the government.

"I admire Lim because he is an honest and principled man. He was not part of the dirty 2004 elections and he is not connected to any 'jueteng' lord, smuggler or illegal logger," Señeres told reporters yesterday after appearing before the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

He was subpoenaed by the NBI last week to shed light on his July 6 interview with the INQUIRER, where he enumerated the names of alleged civilian backers, among them prominent businessmen and politicians.

Señeres stressed that while he had withdrawn his support from the administration, he did not participate in any plot to overthrow the government last February.

"Let me repeat: Withdrawal of support is not illegal; it is not a crime. I believe that it is this administration that is illegal," Señeres told reporters in an interview.

He also said he would not turn into a state witness "for an illegal government."

NBI Acting Director Nestor Mantaring said Señeres executed a four-page affidavit which only confirmed the details of his interview with the INQUIRER.

"We would rather not release the affidavit to the public because we have to validate the facts first," Mantaring said.

Mantaring added that the bureau would issue a subpoena to former journalist Cecilio Arillo, whom Señeres mentioned in his affidavit as the person who had brought up the idea of a transition government.

NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda said Arillo would be summoned to the NBI on Wednesday to explain his alleged role as go-between for former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim together with Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Esmeralda, however, said that Señeres had restrictions during his interview, invoking his right to remain silent four times especially when asked about the participation of the alleged civilian backers.

In his July 6 INQUIRER interview, Señeres ticked off some names from the private sector who he claimed were involved in the Feb. 24 plot: Orbos, former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, ABC-5 chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, construction mogul F.F. Cruz Jr. and Ayala scion Iñigo Zobel.

FORMER Ambassador Roy Señeres appears to be enjoying all the attention given him by the media at the National Bureau of Investigation headquarters in Manila. REM ZAMORA

Sona remains in House — Palace

By Michael Lim Ubac, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

WORRIED FOR THE SAFETY of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the House security office is considering holding the July 24 State of the Nation Address away from its traditional venue which is the lower chamber's plenary hall.

But House Minority Leader Francis Escudero pointed out yesterday that holding the Sona outside the Batasan building would show ordinary Filipino citizens and the rest of the world that the Arroyo government could not even secure its own President.

"If they're really afraid of having the Sona here, they might want to have the President deliver her Sona through a CD (compact disc)," said Escudero, "Or perhaps send her taped/videotaped speech to Congress."

Deputy House secretary general for operations Artemio Adasa told reporters that moving the venue of the Sona was an option being considered by the House leadership after six Magdalo soldiers were arrested in a safe house near the legislature.

Besides high-powered arms and explosives, a blueprint of the Batasan complex was allegedly found, raising suspicions that the rightist rebels might be planning an attack on the legislature building to coincide with Ms Arroyo's Sona.

Despite security concerns, Malacañang said yesterday there was no need to look for an alternative site for the Sona on July 24.

"We have no plans of seeking for a transfer of venue. There might be security issues but we are on top of the situation," said presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio. "We do not see any serious security threat to the President."

He said the Sona had been traditionally staged at the Batasang Pambansa and Malacañang had no plans of breaking this tradition this year.

Claudio also pointed out that changing the venue of the Sona was "entirely the call of Congress, being the host of the event."

The police also said they would not advise the President to drop or move the Sona somewhere else.

"No, we will not advice the President not to push through with the Sona," Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon said yesterday.

"Instead, we will advice the President to push through with the Sona because it is [her] obligation... to render her report to the public of her accomplishments," he said.

"We will not recommend a change in the plan, and we will just ensure that the area will be safe," Calderon said.

The Metro Manila Police decided to increase the number of security forces to be fielded inside and outside Congress from 8,600 to about 10,000.

Palace: We have defeated plotters

THE GOVERNMENT HAD DEFEATED groups plotting to topple President Macapagal-Arroyo, Malacañang said yesterday after charges were filed against six military officers and two civilians arrested last week.

The men belonged to a group called Magdalo, a military fraternity that played a key role in an alleged plot against Arroyo in February and a failed mutiny in 2003.

Authorities were moving in to flush out remaining supporters of these groups before Ms Arroyo's annual State of the Nation Address to Congress later this month, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

"The operational capability of these power-grabbers has been crippled," he said in a statement, adding that the threat has abated.

He said it was now "time to finish off their whole network of underground supporters, including their financiers, to make sure that there are no residual cells that can make any more mischief and in the process destroy the lives and careers of young military officers." *AFP*

New wage hike starts today—DoLE

LABOR SECRETARY ARTURO D. Brion announced yesterday that all private sector minimum-wage workers and employees in the National Capital Region would receive daily wages between P313 and P350 effective today.

The wages include the P2-increase which will be added to the P275 basic wage of daily wage workers plus the P50 emergency cost of living allowance (Ecola) under Wage Order 9 and 10.

Brion said Wage Order No. NCR-12 raised the daily rate for minimum wage workers in NCR from P325 to P350.

Under the provisions of the latest wage order, workers in the non-agricultural sector in NCR are entitled to a minimum of P350 daily basic pay.

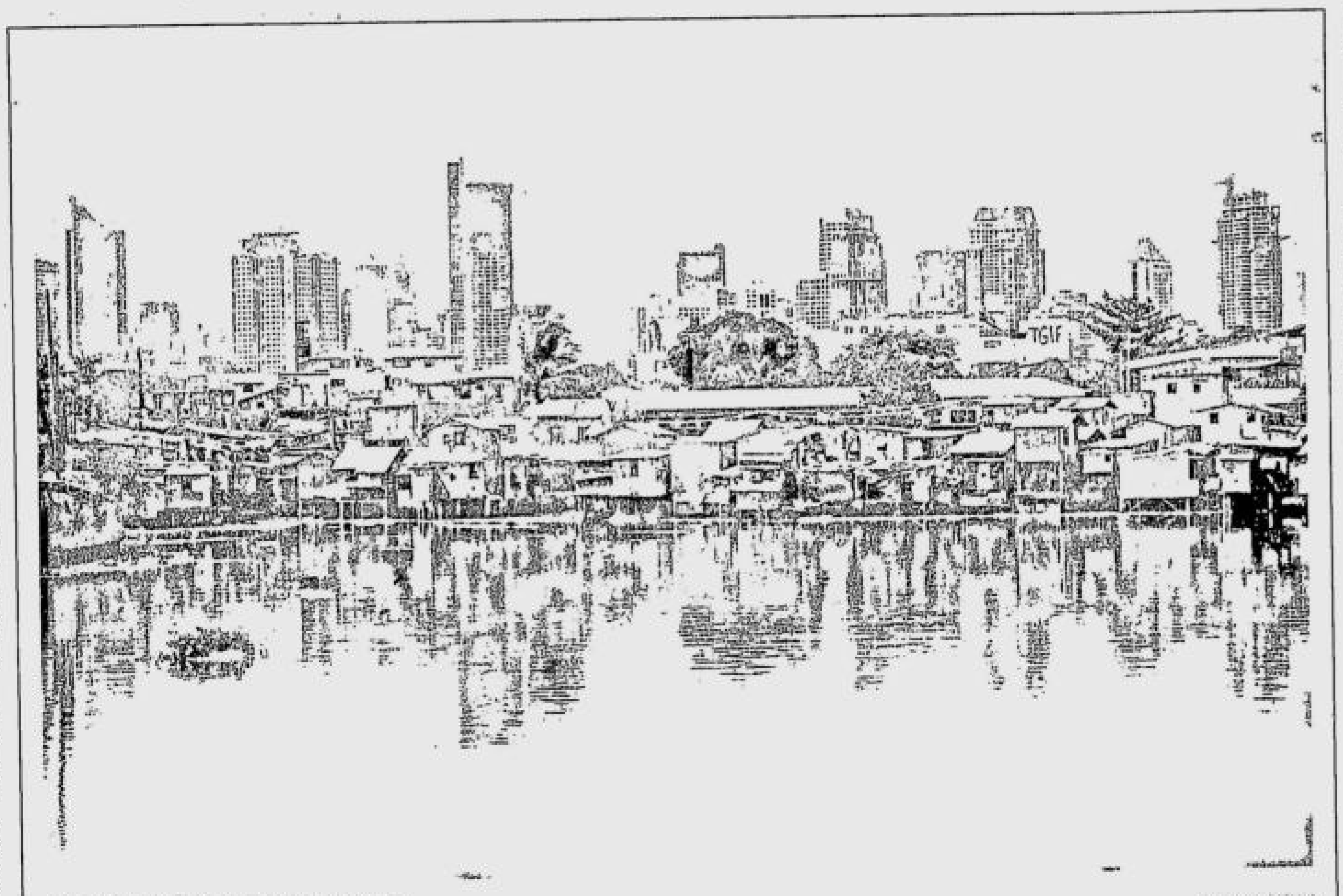
But the applicable minimum wage for agriculture workers, private hospitals with bed capacity of 100 or less, retail and service establishments with fewer than 15 workers and small manufacturing industries with fewer than 10 workers in the region is P268 in the basic pay, with P50 Ecola or a total of P313 daily.

The new wage order does not cover household or domestic helpers and others in the personal service of another, including family drivers and workers of registered Barangay Micro Business Enterprises hired after the order's effectivity.

For private educational institutions in the NCR, the share given to covered workers and employees in the increase in tuition for the school year 2006 to 2007 will be regarded as compliance with the prescribed increase in the basic wage.

Private educational institutions in NCR that did not increase their tuition for school year 2006-2007 may defer compliance with the provisions of the wage order until the next school year.

In the case of contractual employees, the increase in the wage shall be shouldered by the principal or client. In the event the principal fails to pay the wage increase, the contractor shall also be liable.



SERENITY ON A CLOUDY DAY

The Makati City skyline and a Pasay City slum—worlds apart—are reflected on this stretch of water. EDWIN BACASMAS

Lafayette mining gets DENR go signal

Test run boosts firm's mining shares in Sydney

By Blanche S. Rivera

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR THE test run that could pave the way for the resumption of operations of Lafayette Mining Ltd.'s P1.4-billion project in Rapu-Rapu Island, Albay.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has ordered the issuance of all necessary permits for the operation of the Australian mining firm's facilities, which was suspended in November last year due to two mine spills.

In a resolution dated July 9, the Pollution Adjudication Board, a quasi-judicial body under the DENR, certified that Lafayette had met all the conditions set by the DENR in its temporary lifting order (TLO) that allowed the test run of the facility.

The PAB instructed the Environmental Management Bureau to issue a wastewater discharge permit and to lift the suspension of the chemical control order registration certificate which would allow Lafayette to buy cyanide for its mining operations.

"The board was unanimous in recommending to the DENR Secretary to allow respondent to operate its processing facilities for 30 days for the conduct of the test run in accordance with the stages as mentioned in the June 16 order," the PAB said.

Environment Secretary Angelo T. Reyes issued a TLO on June 16 that would allow Lafayette to operate its facilities for 30 days to check the viability of its remedial measures.

The test run to be done in three stages required first the payment of P10.4 million in fines by Lafayette, the completion of structures including a storm drainage canal, bigger tailings dam, and emergency control mechanisms that would prevent or minimize any damages during accidents, and the treatment and control of acid mine drainage.

Lafayette chair and president Carlos G. Dominguez welcomed Reyes' order, saying: "[This is a] watershed milestone for the company that is determined to prove it stands for responsible mining and is a sincere partner in the growth of its host communities and the country in general."

After passing all tests, Dominguez said the company expects to be allowed to resume full operations after a lull of eight months.

In Australia, meanwhile, Lafayette shares jumped as much as 13 percent to A$1 ($0.75) before retreating slightly. At 0251 GMT (8:47 p.m. Manila), it was 10.2 percent up at A$0.97 ($0.72) The stock sank to a three-year low of A$.08 ($.06) in early June.

Lafayette, the first foreign firm to develop and run a mine in the Philippines in almost 40 years, estimates the lode will generate revenues of $350 million a year from annual production of 10,000 tons of copper in concentrates, 14,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

A team from the EMB and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau conducted an on-site validation of the measures installed by Lafayette to meet the conditions for the test run from June 30 to July 6.

"The findings during validation as well as the favorable recommendation from the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning, MGB director, MGB regional director and EMB regional director are adequate to warrant the approval of the request and allow the conduct of the test run for a period of 30 days," the PAB said.

With a report from Reuters

QC man faces charges over piranha trade

A QUEZON CITY RESIDENT WILL BE criminally charged for illegally importing and trading piranhas, flesh-eating South American fish, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said yesterday.

Wildlife police raided an upper-middle class home in Xavierville subdivision earlier this month and seized 40 live piranhas owned by Leonardo Marcelino, the DENR said in a statement.

An unnamed neighbor had tipped off authorities about the trade in piranhas in the area, it added.

The government would ask state prosecutors to file criminal charges against the owner for violating wildlife and fisheries laws, it said.

Imports and trade of the fish, which have lacerating teeth that can take big bites out of the flesh of their victims, are banned.

Piranhas are usually found in the fresh waters of northern South America, but could adapt easily to new environments, the department said. *AFP*

FILE photo of flesh-eating South American fish.

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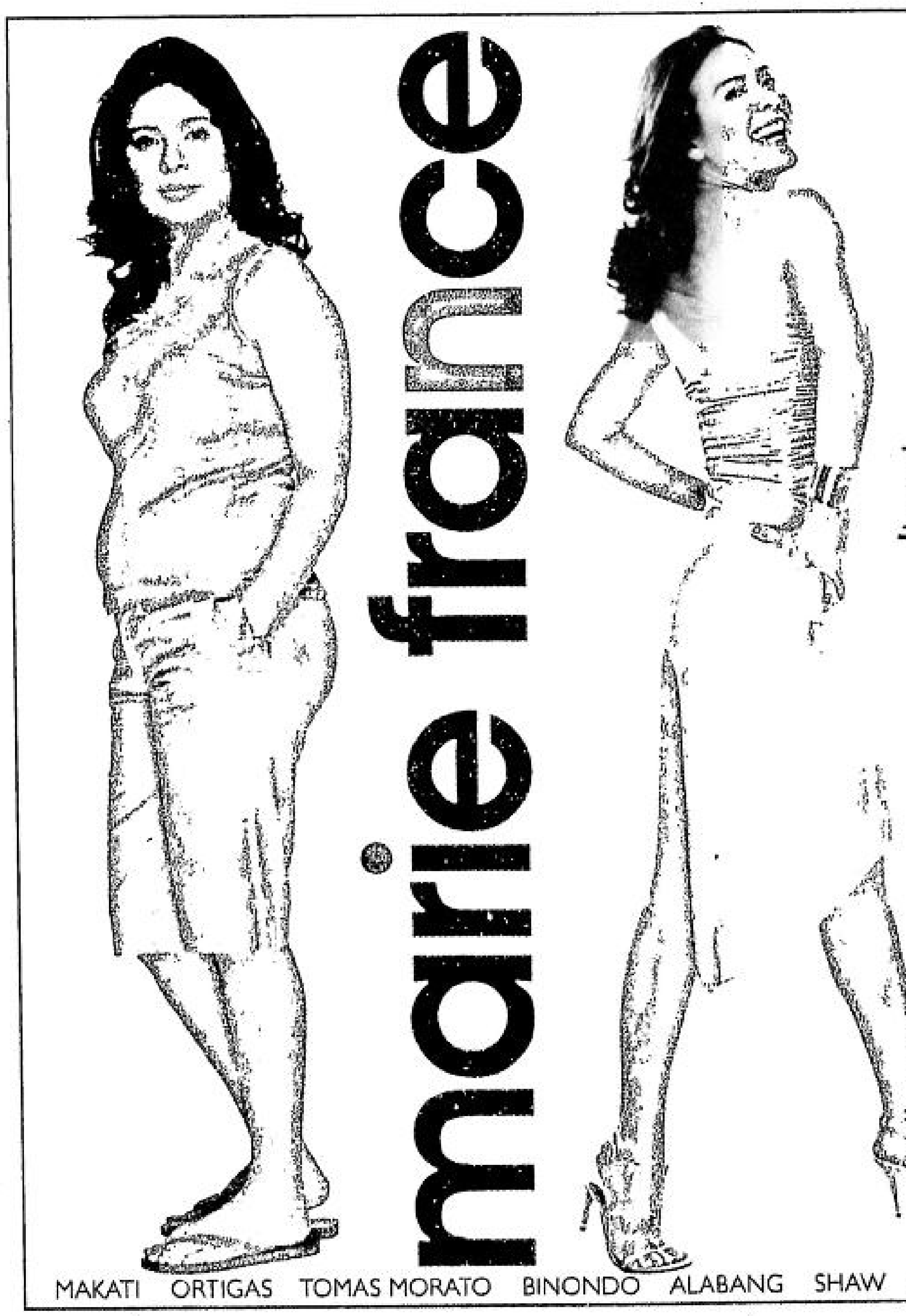

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CBCP shuns impeachment to arrive at the truth

From page A1

Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez signed one of the four impeachment complaints against Ms Arroyo two weeks ago as a citizen who wanted to join the search for the truth amid the crisis of legitimacy hounding the Arroyo presidency.

The charges against the President include culpable violation of the Constitution in connection with claims she rigged the May 2004 election, graft and corruption, and abuse of authority that led to political killings and muzzling of dissenters. Ms Arroyo has denied she cheated in the last presidential election.

"In the light of previous circumstances, we are not inclined at present to favor the impeachment process as the means of establishing the truth," the CBCP said in a pastoral statement released yesterday.

The statement reflected the CBCP's position last year, when the President's allies in the House of Representatives cited a technicality to throw out a bid to impeach her and the bishops refused to join calls for her ouster but urged her not to ignore them.

"(U)nless the process and its rules, as well as the mind-sets of all participating parties, pro and con, are guided by no other motive than genuine concern for the common good, impeachment will once again serve as an unproductive exercise, dismaying every citizen and deepening the citizen's negative perception of politicians—Left, Right, and Center," the CBCP said.

Titled "Shepherding and Prophesying in Hope," the statement was the product of a weekendlong deliberation among 89 bishops, including Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales.

While not exactly as fiery in tone as the one released in January, the latest statement again outlined the CBCP position on "social concerns," including electoral reforms and extrajudicial killings. *(See "At a Glance" on Page A1.)*

Misinterpretation

Iñiguez said on cable network ANC that he was satisfied with the pastoral statement, but expressed apprehension that it could be subject to misinterpretation.

Reactions of groups and individuals to the the pastoral letter depend on where they stand.

Malacañang and its allies welcomed it, but those critical of Ms Arroyo, including certain senators, were surprised by the stand of the bishops on impeachment.

"We concur with the the bishops that impeachment is not the way toward change and resolution in our current political concerns," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement he read in Malacañang.

Bunye said the administration "welcomes and ponders with humility and sincere appreciation the moral counsel from the pastoral letter of the CBCP."

"The message offers many points of agreement and shared objectives between the government and the Church," he said.

Strange

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay said he could not understand the CBCP. "Impeachment is the best, most peaceful way of seeking the truth," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. was just as stumped. "That's the CBCP's privilege. While I don't see how impeachment can succeed, I find it strange that they are not convinced the complainants seek the public good," he said.

Even without the full backing of the Catholic hierarchy, impeachment proponents vowed to push through with their second attempt to impeach Ms Arroyo.

"If they favor the search for the truth but not through impeachment, then through what means?" asked House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, referring to the CBCP.

Escudero reminded the bishops that in batting for reforms in the Commission on Elections, "they have admitted that there was indeed cheating in the last elections."

"We, led by the citizen complainants, are pursuing the only available, legal and peaceful means at arriving at the truth and unless they (bishops) have an alternative to this we will continue to pursue this avenue," he said at a press conference shortly after the CBCP issued the pastoral statement.

LAGDAMEO

Correct move

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles described the CBCP statement a "correct" move.

"The House or Congress is not a correct venue to find guilt or innocence. It's the courts that will decide guilt or no guilt, not Congress in an impeachment case because Congress decides, 'as a policy, whether good or bad, to remove an official," Nograles said.

Hyatt 10

Proimpeachment members of the Hyatt 10 and the Black and White Movement said the impeachment case they filed would proceed, with or without the support of the CBCP.

Former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman of Hyatt 10, a group of former government executives and Cabinet secretaries, said she respected the position of the CBCP.

"We are going through a molting process as a people who believe in democracy and who believe in the people's rights in exacting accountability from its officials, including the President, through the representatives of the people," she said.

Vicente "Enteng" Romano, III, lead convenor of Black and White Movement, said the the CBCP stand on impeachment reflected the people's distrust in political institutions and processes.

"Unfortunately, they (the bishops) do not recommend any other means through which we, the people who are genuinely concerned about the truth, can seek redress and resolution of the political impasse we are in as a result of the non-closure of the legitimacy issue that has hounded the administration," Romano said.

He said impeachment was the only constitutional venue left for the people at this time for seeking the truth. "If Congress will only give a chance for the complaint to be heard and the evidence to be presented, it will lead to a closure that will serve the interests of both sides. Then, we can all finally move on," he said.

Priests sign 5th complaint

About two hours before the CBCP issued its statement, two priests, including the parish priest of San Miguel de Archangel Church located inside the Malacañang compound, added their signatures to the citizens-backed impeachment drive.

Fathers Jerry Sabado and Ernesto Cruz joined Protestant pastors and lay Church workers in signing at the House minority office the fifth impeachment case due to be filed on July 24, when Congress reopens.

The 13 new complainants belonging to the ecumenical group Promotion of Church People's Response called on the CBCP to make a firm and unequivocal stand on the political crisis.

They reminded the CBCP of its "prophetic role" by supporting the people's move to ferret out the truth by way of an impeachment trial for Ms Arroyo.

Sabado, a Carmelite priest, insisted that the "social doctrine" of the Catholic Church called upon the priesthood to be the "ethical conscience" of society, which must "come into the (political) process to pursue truth and justice."

He said the principle of the separation of Church and state was only on governance, and not when the ethical dimension was being questioned.

Since the legitimacy crisis of the Arroyo administration erupted last year, the CBCP has issued four pastoral statements seeking to provide moral guidance in this predominantly Catholic country.

Very slow

Asked how the public, especially the administration, had so far responded to the CBCP's calls, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, CBCP president, replied: "They've been listening, they've been responding."

"We're moving forward but very slow," he told the INQUIRER.

In their latest eight-page pastoral statement, the bishops devoted the first five pages discussing at length the doctrinal and theological foundation for the Church's involvement in social issues. They drew heavily on the Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church.

Days before the plenary assembly, the CBCP had been criticized for allegedly meddling in secular politics. "As shepherds, we offer our moral and religious guidance," the bishops said.

"On the one hand, religion must not be restricted 'to a purely private sphere.' On the other, the Christian message must not be relegated to a purely otherworldly salvation incapable of shedding light on our earthy experience," they noted, citing the late Pope John Paul II's "Centesimus Annus."

The pastoral statement was drafted by a committee composed of Archbishops Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato and Leonardo Legazpi of Caceres, Bishops Chito Tagle of Imus and Pablo David of San Fernando, and Bishop Francisco Claver, prelate-emeritus of Bontoc-Lagawe. ***With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Fe Zamora and Christine O. Avendaño***

Families of 2 missing UP students air appeal

From page A1

was growing mushrooms in Los Baños, Laguna, broke the good news that she was pregnant.

Everything about them seemed cheerful and rosy until news came that the two activist students of the University of the Philippines disappeared supposedly while doing research on farmers in Bulacan.

Based on news reports, Empeño, 22, and Cadapan, 29, were roused at around 2 a.m. on June 26 at their rented home in Hagonoy, Bulacan, by loud pounding on the door, and were seized by armed men wearing bonnets once they stepped out.

A male companion, Manuel Merino, was reported to have been snatched along with the two women.

The militant League of Filipino Students (LFS), which claims Empeño as a member, blamed Army soldiers for the predawn abduction, an allegation denied by the military.

Plea to abductors

After days of futile search, their distraught mothers yesterday showed up at the office of Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II at the Senate to seek his help and issued a similar plea to the abductors: Release them.

"If my daughter has committed a crime, they should bring her out. Let her go through the process. They can file charges against her," the bespectacled, soft-spoken Erlinda Cadapan, 57, told reporters.

"What's important to me is that I know where she is. Her life is precious to me," she added, her voice trailing off.

Concepcion Empeño, 56, school head of the Tapuac Elementary School in Masinloc, could only nod in agreement.

Her son and Karen's brother, Oscar, 31, spoke on her behalf: "Our only desire is to see her. If they're linking her to the underground movement, why don't they file charges? Why don't they bring her out?"

Worrisome

Roxas conceded that the abduction was "worrisome" and assured the families his office would coordinate with the Commission on Human Rights, other government agencies and the military to look into their case.

"The issue here is whether the security agencies of the government are involved in these abductions. We were witness to these a few months ago when an agency of the government picked up five individuals and brought them to a safe house, instead of the prosecutor's office," he said.

Roxas was referring to the case of five supporters of former President Joseph Estrada who were picked up and allegedly tortured by military agents in late May.

"We don't want to make a general statement without any basis, but that is the environment that these appearances are happening in. That's why we'll help them," he said.

Senate probe

The senator indicated that it was too early to say whether he would call for an investigation of the abduction of the two UP students.

"If the information will point to the direction that this is a security operation, then we will follow it up from there," he said. "We don't want to be precipitate in our conclusion, and we will follow it to where the information will lead us."

The abduction, hardly reported in the media, came on the heels of killings of leftist activists, mostly members of the party-list group Bayan Muna, which the human rights watchdog Amnesty International said were creating a "climate of fear and impunity."

So far, 237 activists had been killed since January 2001, when President Macapagal-Arroyo took over the country's top post from Estrada.

Sociology student

Empeño, the third of five children, is a senior BA Sociology student at the UP College of Social Sciences.

When she was abducted, she was doing research on the plight of farmers in Bulacan for her thesis, the only remaining requirement she had to fulfill before she could graduate, according to her family.

Cadapan, the second of five children, is an award-winning triathlete from the UP College of Human Kinetics, also in her senior year. She only had three more subjects to complete before she could graduate.

Church wedding

Cadapan married her, longtime boyfriend in civil rites a few months ago and was preparing for the Church wedding in September, her family said.

She was a community organizer for Anakbayan and volunteer researcher for farmers in Central Luzon, according to reports.

Based on bits of information they had gathered, the families of the two victims said that Army soldiers carried out the abduction. But the Army unit based in Hagonoy has denied this, Erlinda Cadapan said.

Oscar Empeño said his family was aware of the dangers that Karen faced in doing fieldwork as a sociology student, more so when they learned that she did volunteer work for the Alyansa ng Magbubukid ng Bulacan.

"In a way, we expected this to happen. Because they could easily brand her NGO as leftist even though it's a legal organization," he said.

Erlinda Cadapan, for her part, said she was not aware of her daughter's work as an activist.

The human rights group Karapatan said the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and the military should be blamed for the 10 assassinations and 15 involuntary disappearances in the past three weeks.

Target research

"Under the (the intelligence community's) Oplan Bantay Laya, civilians are subjected to so-called target research. Anyone arbitrarily tagged by these so-called intelligence agents as communists or communist sympathizers are then placed on an order of battle and killed," said Jigs Clamor, Karapatan deputy secretary general.

Clamor said the killings and disappearances were happening nationwide, particularly in Eastern Visayas, Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon, Bicol and Southern Mindanao—areas identified by the military to be the hotbed of the communist insurgency.

The military has denied that it is behind the spate of killings.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon vowed to reduce if not totally put a stop to the political killings.

Calderon also accepted the challenge of making the police ability to solve cases of extrajudicial killings as one of the criteria for judging his 15 months in office.

"I have committed the Philippine National Police in my (acceptance) speech that during my administration ... we will really put a stop to these extrajudicial killings," he said. ***With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora***

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Quake rocks Zambales; tremors felt in Metro Manila

By Blanche S. Rivera

A MAGNITUDE 4.2 EARTHquake hit Zambales shortly before noon yesterday, sending tremors up to Metro Manila.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology recorded the tectonic quake at 11:54 a.m. with its epicenter located at 44 km southwest of Iba, Zambales, with a shallow depth of 17 km.

Intensity 5 was felt in nearby Olongapo City while intensity 4 was felt in Manila, intensity 3 in Pasig and 2 in Quezon City and Clark Airbase, Pampanga.

No damage was reported and no after shocks were monitored by the Phivolcs.

The latest felt earthquake was recorded on July 1, with a magnitude of 3.7. It was caused by a movement in the Bangui fault with an epicenter located 52 kms east of Laoag City.

The Philippines, being within the Pacific ring of fire, experiences up to 25 earthquakes everyday, but most of them are not strong enough to be felt.

Phivolcs chief Renato Solidum said the epicenter was actually nearer Olongapo City than Iba, but Phivolcs does not have a seismic station in Iba and could not determine the intensity of the quake in the Zambales provincial capital.

The Phivolcs recorded an aftershock at 5:40 p.m. 42 kms southwest of Iba, Zambales. The aftershock had a magnitude of 3.3 and a depth of 13 km.

Intensity 3 was felt in Olongapo City and Intensity 1 in Quezon City due to the aftershock, Phivolcs said.

UCPB answers money laundering raps

Bank declines to give info, cites bank secrecy law

By Gil C. Cabacungan

THE UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK (UCPB) has disputed the money laundering allegations hurled by Joelle Pelaez against the bank, saying the former beauty queen's actual investments under her name were just a fraction of an investment package of commercial papers worth billions of pesos.

"Some of the investments of Ms Pelaez were funded by a loan and the face amounts of the investment instruments were much larger than her participation, so other investors participated therein as well without using her name," said UCPB legal services executive Edgardo R. Balbin in a letter to the National Bureau of Investigation dated July 2.

"In view thereof, her claim in news reports that her name was used to launder money in large investments is not correct," Balbin added.

Balbin, however, declined to provide other information on the peso and foreign currency deposit accounts of Pelaez, citing bank secrecy regulations.

UCPB was included in an fraud case filed by Pelaez against deposed President Joseph Estrada and officials of the San Miguel Corp. for allegedly forging her signature in laundering P2.07 billion worth of government securities and other debt instruments.

But based on Balbin's report to the NBI, Pelaez only had P3 million worth of government securities and commercial papers under her name from the time she placed her money in February 2000 to the time she withdrew her investments in June the same year.

Pelaez's investments were pooled with other investors managed in trust by the bank with a total face value of P1.661 billion.

Prior to her P3-million investment, Pelaez had made a modest P200,000-investment in a commercial paper on May 3, 1999 which she used as a collateral to borrow P150,000 from UCPB. The loan, secured on July 5, 1999, was paid 22 days later.

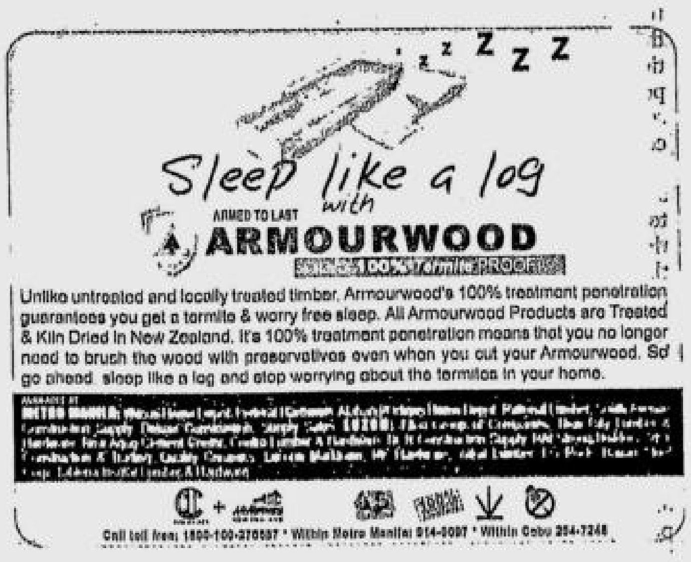
UCPB said that Pelaez's P3-million investment she placed a few months after came from the P5-million one-year loan UCPB granted to her in February 2000.

This loan became past due after six months when Pelaez stopped paying for both the principal and interest.

UCPB filed a court case to collect on Pelaez's loan and after four years, obtained a favorable ruling from the Court of Appeals, which ordered Pelaez to pay the P5 million loan.

UCPB had been able to secure an attachment on two condominium properties owned by Pelaez's mother, Blanquita. UCPB, however, could not sell the assets because their titles were encumbered.

The loan has since been sold to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation.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'Nicole' strikes alleged rapist with handbag

From page A1

the hearing was to start and Judge Benjamin Pozon was not around.

At the time it happened, Smith was seated on a row of chairs for the accused—the first line of seats one would see on entering the courtroom. None among the media knew for sure what happened—whether Smith, as claimed by Nicole's mother, intended to trip her, or she had mistaken a harmless movement of his legs as she passed by.

Admonition from judge

Nicole appeared disheveled, still wiping her tears, when she was finally recalled to the witness stand.

In the middle of the hearing, Judge Pozon spoke separately and privately to Smith and Nicole and then told the court: "Starting next hearing, the accused would [take] the [next] row of seats to avoid such incidents from happening again. I also instructed the complainant and the accused to respect the solemnity of proceedings to help prevent these incidents from happening again."

On the stand, Nicole resumed her testimony where it ended at the last hearing—the point where she allegedly felt Smith on top of her, kissing her lips and neck and caressing her breasts while they were inside a Starex van in Subic Bay Freeport last Nov. 1.

Smith had just forced her out of Neptune Club, where they had met earlier, she said.

Screaming invectives

Under questioning by her private lawyer, Evalyn Ursua, Nicole described how she struggled to fight off Smith despite her weakness and intoxication, and later found herself on a street pavement with her pants down, front side back.

"I was resisting and I was trying to push him away with my hands. I was very weak and he was heavy ... I was trying to tell him to [stop]," said Nicole, shaking her head to signify no.

"He just continued what he was doing," she said, throwing Smith a fierce glare.

Laughter in the van

When Ursua asked Nicole what else Smith did to her, Nicole again gave an outburst, screaming invectives at the accused.

" ... You knew I was drunk that time," she said.

The Americans just sat upright, almost motionless. Smith stared straight ahead.

Nicole, meanwhile, had slumped on the stand and cried, prompting the court to declare a break.

Calmer when she returned to the stand, Nicole testified for another hour and a half before the court again took a break.

Under Ursua's questioning, she related how she repeatedly tried to push away Smith, who she said, forced himself into her.

She also narrated that she heard others in the van laughing. Smith's coaccused were Lance Corporals Dominic Duplantis and Keith Silkwood and S/Sgt. Chad Carpentier, who allegedly cheered Smith on.

Head spinning

"I was shouting, I didn't like what he was doing to me ... I was growing weak, my head was aching and my brain felt like I wanted to shut everything off. I wanted to sleep, but at the same time I wanted to stay awake so that I could fight Smith and so that he would not succeed in what he was intending to do," said Nicole, testifying in Filipino.

Ursua asked what she felt Smith was about to do to her.

"I was afraid he would rape me ... He was kissing me on my lips and neck and he was touching my breasts. I was resisting ... What else could happen next?" Nicole said, her voice breaking.

Asked what she remembered next, Nicole replied: "I don't know what happened but when I regained consciousness, I just realized I was already on the ground and my pants were on the reverse."

Searching at the bar

Corroborating what previous prosecution witnesses had told the court, Nicole said she then returned to Neptune Club to look for the serviceman. But he was not there and she was brought by Subic law enforcers to Grand Leisure Hotel, where she, her stepsister Anna Liza Franco and a younger sister had been billeted for their supposed holiday at Subic.

At the hotel, Nicole said she was offered a glass of water and a cup of chocolate drink. Minutes later, she said she felt pain all over her body.

"My body was aching and I felt pain in my vagina ... [That's when] I confirmed that I was raped by Smith. Then I told Anna (Franco) that I am going to complain," said Nicole.

Nicole related what Franco had also said in an earlier testimony. It concerned a female doctor at the James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital who supposedly told her, "Were you raped? Maybe you wanted it," and a Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority official named Ben Natividad, who allegedly suggested that she settle her case out of court.

Emboldened by Castro

Nicole said she was further emboldened to pursue her case upon meeting Maria Fe Castro at the SBMA Intelligence and Investigation Office. Castro was among those who said she saw how the servicemen dumped Nicole at Subic Freeport's Alava Pier before running off to their ship, USS Essex, docked nearby.

"Fe Castro told me that I was the girl that was unloaded by the US servicemen like a pig. She was crying ... I felt even angrier at them, and my feeling that they violated me even grew stronger," said Nicole.

'Confrontation healthy for Nicole'

By Volt Contreras

NICOLE FINALLY HAVING THE the nerve to physically confront her alleged rapist inside the courtroom was actually "healthy" for her recovery, as far as her therapist was concerned.

"That shows she's now able to direct her anger at the right parties. It's part of the (healing) process. It's healthy," Dr. June Lopez told the INQUIRER after the hearing.

According to Lopez, the complainant was "provoked" into assaulting the US Marine, but the doctor declined to elaborate.

Asked what that provocation might be, private prosecutor Evalyn Ursua said that from what she saw from her seat, Nicole was entering the courtroom coming back from the toilet and found the feet of the accused blocking her path.

"One thing led to another and she lost her balance at one point. She fell on the floor," the lawyer recalled.

Venting her rage

Ursua said Nicole later confided in her that "she's just had enough with all that had happened and that she just vented her rage against the accused. If I, too, were in her position, what she did was understandable."

While Smith's Filipino defense counsel did not make an issue of the incident during the hearing, he expressed dismay in an interview off-court.

"We should have no more emotional outbursts when the case is already in court," said lawyer Benjamin Formoso.

On questioning by Ursua, a tearful Nicole said that since her alleged rape, she had never returned to her native Zamboanga City because she felt "ashamed."

Image in media

"I'm already portrayed in the news as the bad one and who had no one else to blame but myself because I got drunk," she said in Filipino. "But what's wrong with my drinking? That's precisely why I went there, to enjoy."

"I did not want this to happen," she insisted. "I know that they (the US Marines) knew I was drunk."

Nicole also revealed that she lost her cell phone and wallet on the night of the alleged rape. This was when Ursua asked her about the denim pants she was then wearing.

Expert witness

In one of the pockets, a wrapper for pancreatin—a digestive enzyme—was recovered by investigators, but Nicole could not explain how it got there since she had never taken such substance.

Nicole's direct examination is expected to be completed today—but she will not be grilled immediately after by the defense.

On prosecutors' motion, the court will first hear from their expert witness, Dr. Raquel Fortun, a leading forensic pathologist, before calling Nicole back to the stand for her cross-examination.

Group seeks to create new generation of patriots

From page A1

the RFM Foundation, selects 30 national finalists who undergo a training program. From them the 10 winners are chosen.

Something was lacking

But in 2001, many winners felt something was lacking in the initiative.

"It is not enough that you are recognized. We asked ourselves what really was the meaning of winning in the search," said Asis, who won in 1998.

With the ouster of President Joseph Estrada as the backdrop, she and other past winners approached RFM and proposed to "reposition" the search.

"The need for good governance was very obvious. We had to answer the need for young leaders and role models," Asis said.

The past winners started to initiate changes in the search. They created a "nation-building" program to inspire finalists to be of service to the country.

Knowing that more is not only merrier but also more effective, the past winners also started the alumni community, this time composed of not only the previous winners, but also all national finalists.

Youth workshops

Asis and other alumni have been organizing leadership and nation-building workshops and seminars for the youth. They plan to go around colleges and universities in the country this year, drawing strength and inspiration from knowing that the community is growing soon.

The alumni community also designs and facilitates the training program for the annual national finalists for the search.

The program, called the "formation process," spans about four days and works by helping finalists to reflect on what really is the meaning of excellence.

The activities, which range from film viewing, discussions with outstanding leaders to group sharing and reflections, are usually done at the Balai Taal, the Concepcions' picturesque rest house in Tagaytay City.

Finalists need not worry about transportation, food and accommodation as the RFM Foundation and its partners, National Bookstore and the Rotary Club of Makati Central, shoulder the costs.

There are 29 finalists this year from all over the country. The formation process began on Friday and the 10 winners will be awarded in Malacañang on Friday.

Being a TOSP alumna (she won in 1995), Sharief is a regular speaker in the formation process, sharing her own story, of how she discovered real fulfillment.

A turning point

Sharief herself considers her stint at the TOSP as the turning point in her life. Better than the trophy she got, the recognition meant a "covenant" for her to dedicate her life to service.

Right after finishing medicine at the Mindanao State University in Lanao del Sur in 1995, she started getting juicy offers from big hospitals.

But she stayed, citing the situation in her community. That year, Estrada had just declared an "all-out war" against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mindanao.

"I would see patients picking out maggots from their wounds. They had no money to buy medicines," Sharief recalled.

She would shell out her own money for her patients, even during her stint as a trainee at the Iligan District Hospital. But her limited allowance was no match for the number of poor patients trooping to the hospital.

Soliciting aid

She knew she could help more people if she went out of the hospital.

Sharief started the Mindanao Center for Training, Research and Extension Services in 1998 to offer training for youth leadership, women empowerment and even health education.

She would solicit help from government officials in Metro Manila and go back to her province to train people and distribute relief goods during the war.

She knew that was not enough, however. Being a graduate of a state university, she knew there were many poor students deprived of quality education because they could not pass the entrance exam.

"Those who failed the entrance exam are those who needed more training and teaching. So what would we do with those who did not pass the exam?" she said.

Using her own money, just like in her years as a student-trainee, and getting help from sponsors and partners, Sharief set up the Philippine Muslim Teachers College in 2000. Last year, she also started the Buad Agricultural School.

Her relatives would tell her she had given up so many opportunities because of her social work.

A trophy is not an end

"Receiving a trophy does not end your student career of serving and leading," Asis said.

She said that winning "is only the beginning to ensure that you continue your advocacy" even outside the comfort zone of academic institutions.

Born to activist parents who had trained her when she was a child never to talk to strangers on the phone for they could be soldiers out to arrest them, Asis saw with her own eyes what it took her parents to help improve the country.

She is doing her share now: "I don't want to tell my children I have not done my part. My worst fear is we are still in such a mess and I have not done my part."

Though she has been busy with her work with the Asian Development Bank, she always finds time to organize activities of the TOSP-AC.

Leadership institute

She dreams of soon creating a "leadership institute" out of the community as a way to provide the younger generations "real role models," who are difficult to find now, she said.

The community also dreams of expanding the annual search to reach out to more colleges and universities in the country, to inspire more students to strive to be of better service to the country.

There are many things in this country that need to be fixed and it is no longer enough to point out things that have gone wrong.

People also need to do what is right, to sustain the idealism of the youth and continue, as the TOSP saying goes, "learning, leading and serving for life."

Aid, not bribes, Palace says of gifts to bishops

From page A1

"If we wanted to bribe anyone, shouldn't the bribe be made for the personal gain of the recipient and not for his community? Do you think people can be swayed by just breaking bread with the President?" asked the President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, in an interview with the INQUIRER.

Defensor said that giving donations of rice and medicine to Church communities was part of the government's responsibility. To classify them as bribes was "missing the point" of the exercise, he said.

He also did not find anything wrong with the President having dinner with bishops in Malacañang since she normally consulted with Church leaders on state affairs. He said it was only the "politicking bishops" who did not approve of Palace invitations.

"Let us not destroy the institution of the Church and let us not destroy the reputation of every bishop," Defensor said.

Carping

Defensor said that while Malacañang could not stop people from criticizing the President's every move, he warned that the unabated carping could lead to a slowdown in the delivery of key propoor programs.

Ms Arroyo's adviser on political affairs, Gabriel Claudio, said the Palace was not keen on debating an issue that he doubted was raised by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. "I really doubt whether that issue was raised by a bishop, it's so petty."

Pro-Arroyo lawmakers also weighed in on the issue.

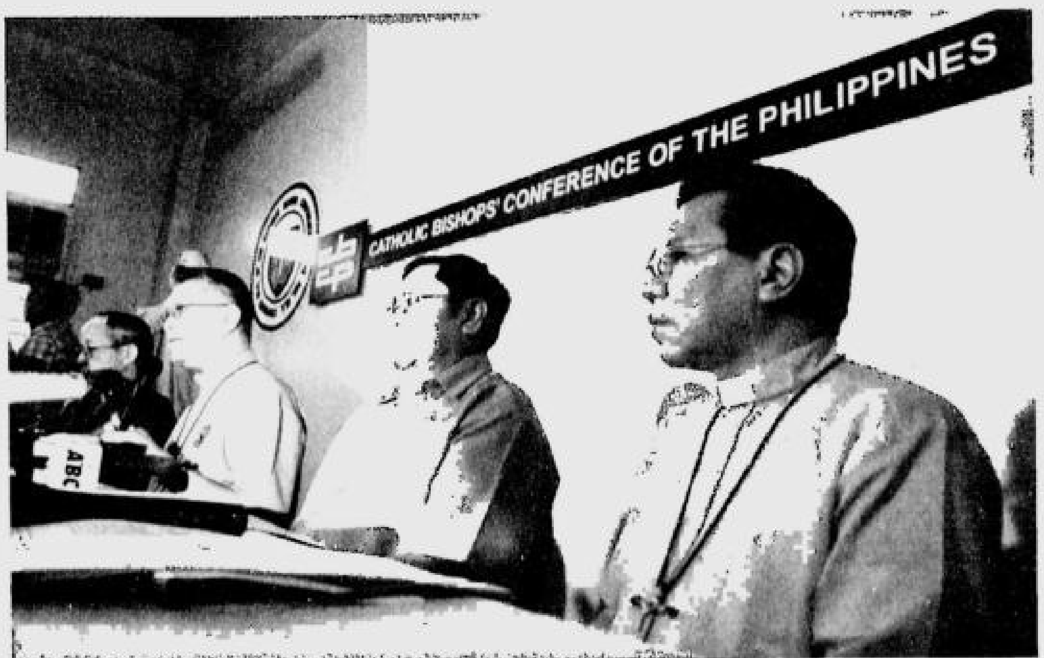
Rep. Marcelino Libanan of Eastern Samar, echoing the sentiment of his colleagues, said government subsidy to parishes was a "legitimate service for the poor which is given without any political considerations."

Libanan urged the bishops "to be fair with the President and not to misread her propoor programs."

Exercise discretion

In a news conference yesterday, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, CBCP vice president, said the prelates agreed during their plenary to exercise discretion on apparent Palace overtures while preparing to discuss important public questions.

"We should be independent of any kind of perceived favors that are being presented simply to win our opinions," said Ledesma.


CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES
ABC

ARCHBISHOPS Antonio Ledesma and Angel Lagdameo, and Bishops Arturo Bastes and Angelito Lampon appear at the CBCP press conference in Intramuros Manila. REM ZAMORA

At the start of the plenary on Saturday, Parañaque Bishop Jesse Mercado had raised the propriety of accepting offers of cheap medicines, rice and other aid as the bishops were about to discuss controversial issues affecting Ms Arroyo.

Ledesma, referring to reports that the President had invited bishops to dinner at the Palace and a swank restaurant, said there had been efforts by the government to "dialogue with bishops."

It's not unusual

"So this is not unusual," he said.

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, the CBCP president, said he was aware of one bishop who had acceded to a Malacañang invitation to call attention poverty and education issues in his diocese.

He said the bishop got prompt action from the President who promised that the teachers would be paid soon.

Ledesma said events like this were "positive efforts of those in public office to also listen and make known their views when it comes to common concerns on the social teachings of the Church."

He said he had, in fact, been to a dialogue between bishops and Cabinet members from the departments of health, education, and environment and natural resources last week.

He said bishops had also received a letter from Malacañang proposing another dialogue on the "social teachings of the Church" as contained in a recently published compendium.

Ledesma said the CBCP's independence could be gleaned from "our own independent opinions on the many social issues." *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac*

Filipino family 'under siege,' say 'troubled' bishops

By Christian V. Esguerra

CBCP President Archbishop Angel Lagdameo answers a question from media at the headquarters in Intramuros, Manila Monday. With Lagdameo are Bishops Arturo Bastes and Angelito Lampon. REM ZAMORA

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONference of the Philippines (CBCP) is "deeply troubled" by efforts to undermine "cherished religious values" such as the planned incorporation of sex education modules in the public school system.

In a pastoral letter released yesterday, the CBCP said the Filipino family was "under siege" from pending bills covering population management, marriage and family life and reproductive health.

The bishops were ostensibly referring to the controversial House Bill 3773 dubbed as "an integrated and comprehensive national policy on responsible parenthood, population management and sustainable development."

"We are deeply troubled by attempts to legislate or make as state policy, ideas that tend to weaken or even destroy cherished religious values regarding the nature of life, the nature of marriage as union of man and woman, child bearing, the values formation of children, etc," the CBCP said in an eight-page pastoral statement titled "Shepherding and Prophesying in Hope."

"Such ideas are part of an orientation that is fundamentally secularistic and materialistic, separated from their religious and moral roots," the bishops stressed.

Drawing inspiration from Pope Benedict XVI's message during the recent World Meeting of Families in Spain, the bishops said the Filipino family was "ill-served" by developments like the sex education modules.

The CBCP Commission on Family and Life earlier denounced the project for its alleged lack of Christian values.

Filipina Rañada, a special education expert, earlier told the INQUIRER that the project was an offshoot of equally questionable materials which were already in the local school system since 1973.

Rañada, who was tasked to review the materials in 1996, said one module for high school students suggested the idea that murdering an adulterous husband in his sleep was OK.

One lesson plan reportedly allowed a school in Pampanga to use eggplants, cucumbers and bananas to teach Grade 5 pupils the proper way to use a condom.

Still another module purportedly revised nursery rhymes and songs into something lewd: "Simon says... touch your genitals" or "This is the way I wash my genitals."

"As the foundation of civilization, life and love, the family is most seriously threatened," the CBCP said yesterday.

The bishops maintained that Catholic lay groups and the CBCP Commission on Family and Life would continue to oppose projects such as the population management bill and the sex education modules.

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SC upholds DOJ decision; RJ, 3 others off the hook

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS RULED THAT businessmen Ramon P. Jacinto, Jaime Colayco and two others did not commit plunder when they diverted P720 million from one company to its subsidiaries in 2002.

In a 10-page decision, the high court upheld an earlier decision of former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, who threw out the criminal complaint filed by a stockholder of the First Women's Credit Corp. (FWCC) for lack of probable cause.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Renato Corona, the high tribunal said it would let the decision be unless complainant Shig Katayama, FWCC director and stockholder, could prove that Perez committed a grave abuse of authority during the preliminary investigation of the case.

"For this reason, the Court considers it sound judicial policy to refrain from interfering in the conduct of preliminary investigations and to leave the Department of Justice ample latitude of discretion in the determination of what constitutes sufficient evidence to establish probable cause for the prosecution of supposed offenders," the Supreme Court said.

"Consistent with this policy, courts do not reverse the Secretary of Justice's findings and conclusions on the matter of probable cause except in clear cases of grave abuse of discretion. Thus, petitioners will prevail only if they can show that the CA erred in not holding that public respondent's resolutions were tainted with grave abuse of discretion," it added.

Katayama had accused Jacinto and Colayco, president and vice president of FWCC, respectively, and business partners Antonio P. Tayao and Glicerio Perez of plunder when they allegedly raided FWCC's coffers, diverting the staggering amount of P720,333,266 to the RJ Group of Companies.

He claimed that parts of the money also went to companies affiliated with FWCC, namely, Quantum, Shigra, RJ Ventures Realty Corporation and Save-a-Lot.

Katayama then asked the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to order Jacinto and Colayco to account for, and return the diverted amount to FWCC and that an interim management committee be appointed to end the "dissipation, wastage and loss of corporate funds."

Jacinto and Colayco, while admitting that they had withdrawn money from FWCC for the benefit of companies associated with Jacinto, claimed that such withdrawals constituted legitimate advances and loans extended in the ordinary course of business. They said the board's decision to lend money to the RJ Group of Companies was intended to maximize FWCC's idle funds.

Katayama then filed a complaint before the City Prosecutor's Office in Makati, accusing Jacinto, Colayco, Tayao and Perez of resistance and disobedience to persons in authority, unlawful use of means of publications and unlawful utterances, falsification of private documents and use of falsified documents and estafa.

The investigating prosecutor issued a resolution finding probable cause to prosecute the respondents for falsification of private documents and grave coercion.

Jacinto and others appealed the resolution before Perez who ruled in favor of respondents finding "no probable cause."

Prosecutor told to answer raps filed by 'Plinky'

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez has directed a prosecutor of Bago City, Negros Occidental, to answer charges of failing to follow procedure during the preliminary investigation of the assault case filed against former TV host and fitness instructor Plinky Recto.

First Assistant City Prosecutor Elmer Soguilon would be made to respond to the complaint lodged against him by Recto and her brother, Sen. Ralph Recto, Gonzalez said here on Friday.

"I will ask the prosecutor to explain if the requirement for due process was followed, because if it was not, something is wrong," Gonzalez said.

Soguilon had found merit in the direct assault complaint filed against Recto by her former boyfriend. On this basis, the Municipal Trial Court in Bago City had issued a warrant of arrest for Recto, lawyer Rowena Guanzon said.

Guanzon is Recto's legal counsel.

Soguilon maintained that he followed proper procedure, saying that he did not resolve the complaint until Recto submitted a counter-affidavit.

Guanzon said that while Recto did submit a counter-affidavit, Soguilon did not conduct a preliminary investigation.

"There are no minutes of a preliminary investigation; Soguilon acted in bad faith," she said.

Guanzon said they would be filing an administrative complaint against Soguilon and would ask the court that he be inhibited from prosecuting the case.

Recto and her former boyfriend have been engaged in a lengthy legal battle over custody of their one-year-old son.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, July 11, 2006
14th Week in Ordinary Time
Benedict

1st Reading:	Hos 8:4-7, 11-13
Gospel:	Matthew 9:32-38

Some people brought to Jesus a man who was dumb because he was possessed by a demon. When the demon was driven out, the dumb man began to speak. The crowds were astonished and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." (But the Pharisees said, "He drives away demons with the help of the prince of demons.")

Jesus went around all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and he cured every sickness and disease. When he saw the crowds he was moved with pity, for they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the workers are only few. Ask the master of the harvest to send workers to gather his harvest."

Commentary

There are so many other dead idols in Israel made of silver and gold that only reap a whirlwind of destruction. God is only aware of their injustice and how they mock him. And they do not listen or heed any of the words/laws of God that are given to save and make his people human.

Jesus is about the work of making people whole, more human and bringing life (healing a mute). He preaches and his presence brings life; and many are loud in his praise. But there is no mention that people change, or follow Jesus. And yet Jesus is so filled with pity and compassion that he tends to everyone and mourns the lack of others to work with him.

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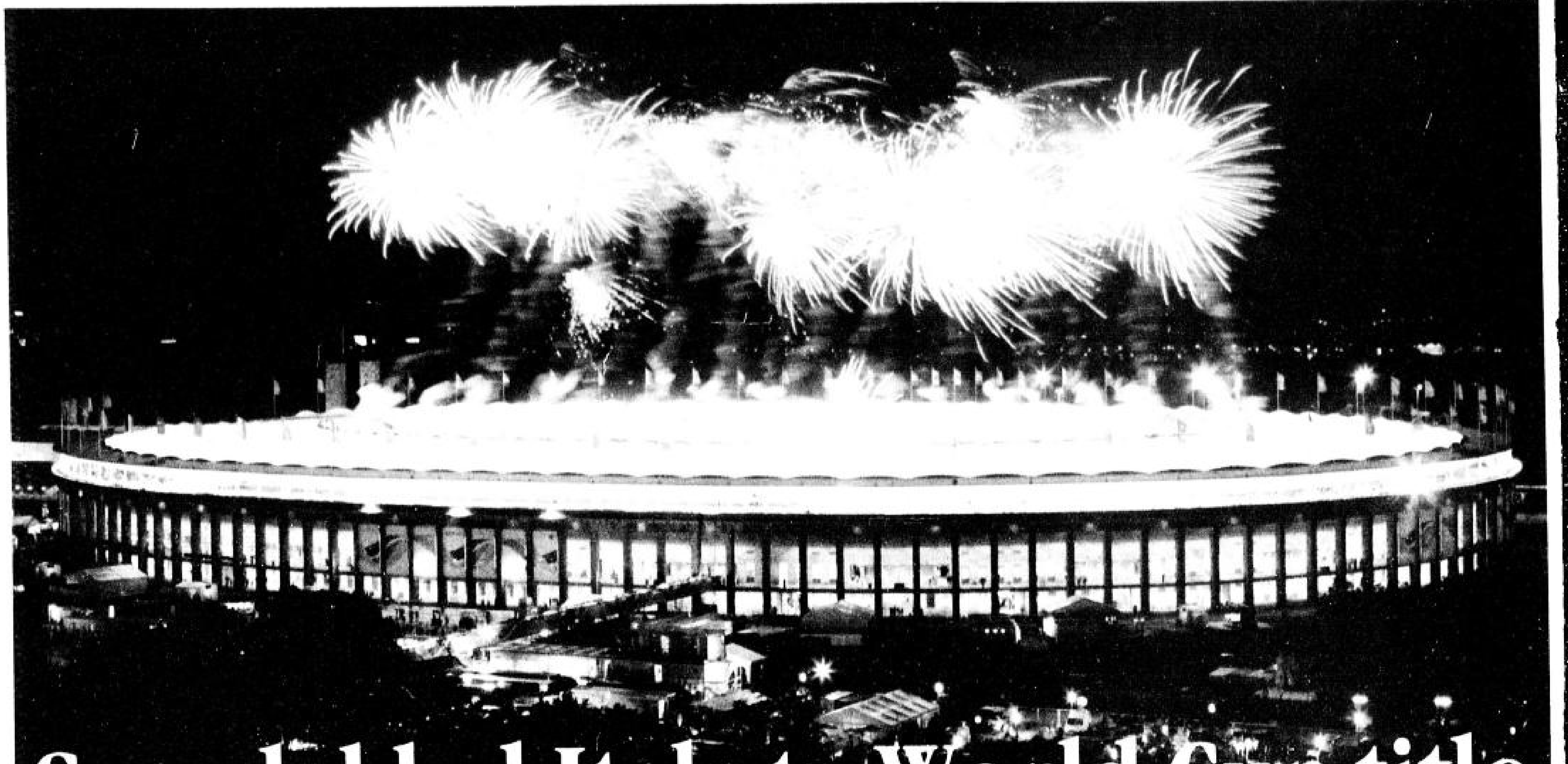


Scandal led Italy to World Cup title

From page A1

Even without their leader for the shootout after the 1-1 draw, the French only missed once. But Italy, rarely strong in such situations, made all five penalty kicks.

"It's incredibly emotional, words can hardly describe it," Grosso said. "Maybe we still don't realize what we have achieved. We really wanted to win and in the end, we made it."

Scandal helped

Until now, no team since the last Azzurri champions in 1982 had to endure the stress and anguish of a soccer scandal. Rather than be disrupted by the current probe ripping apart the national sport back home, the Italians survived.

"If the scandal hadn't happened, I think we wouldn't have won the World Cup," Italy midfielder Gennaro Gattuso said. "It has given us more strength."

In the final, Italy outlasted France, which underwent a renaissance of its own in the last month. The French controlled the flow of play, only to fail to finish through 120 minutes. Their only goal—Zidane's penalty kick in the seventh minute—was the lone score made by an Italy opponent in seven games of the monthlong tournament.

"I've won many championships, many scudetti (Italian league titles), but a joy so big I have never felt," Italy coach Marcello Lippi said. "It is the greatest joy, absolutely."

Twelve minutes after Zidane's goal, the Italians put the ball into the net on Materazzi's header off a corner kick. And then the Italians held on in a game marked by sloppiness and venom.

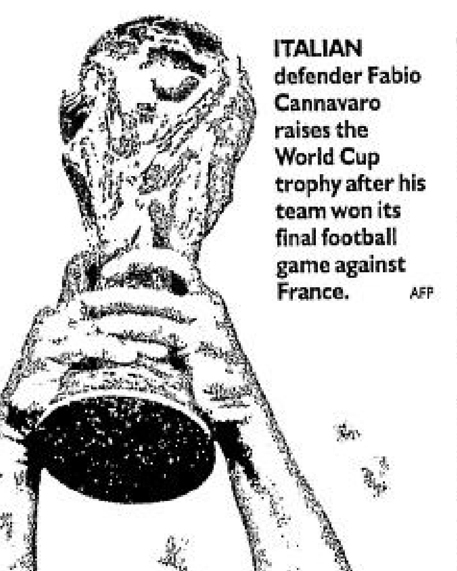
This was hardly artistic on either side, and rarely did Italy threaten over the final 75 minutes. But the Azzurri ignored recent history—they lost a quarterfinal shootout to France in 1998, when Les Bleus went on to their only championship.

Andrea Pirlo, Materazzi, Daniele de Rossi and Alessandro del Piero all easily beat France goalkeeper Fabien Barthez in the shootout. The difference was the miss by rarely used David Trezeguet, which hit the crossbar on France's second attempt.

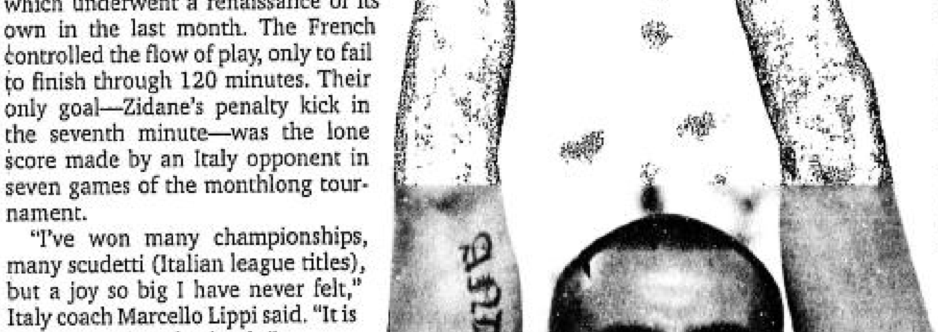
"This is part of soccer. I placed it well and afterward it is the bad luck of the game," Trezeguet said.

Screams of victory

When Grosso connected with his left foot, the sliver of Italian fans in the opposite corner of Olympic Stadium finally could let out their breath—and screams of victory.



ITALIAN defender Fabio Cannavaro raises the World Cup trophy after his team won its final football game against France. AFP



ITALIAN fans gather in Rome's Circo Massimo in jubilation. AFP

On the trophy stand, amid hugs and slaps on the back, Materazzi placed a red, white and green top hat on the Jules Rimet Trophy. Captain Fabio Cannavaro then held it high as cameras flashed everywhere. An impromptu Tarantella by the players followed as silver confetti fluttered around them.

It was, by far, the prettiest sight of the night.

With a 25-game unbeaten streak dating back nearly two years, the Italians added this title to their championships in 1934, 1938 and 1982—when another match-fixing investigation plagued Serie A.

The hero then in Spain was striker Paolo Rossi, fresh off a two-year suspension for his role in match-fixing. This time, there were a dozen stars and a coach, Marcello Lippi, who seemed to make all the right moves.

Italy won its first-round group over the United States, the Czech Republic and Ghana. Then it beat Australia on a controversial penalty in injury time that Francesco Totti converted.

It routed Ukraine 3-0 before depressing the host nation with two stunning goals in the final minutes of extra time for a semifinal win over Germany.

Gianluigi Buffon made the save of the final match in the 104th minute as the ever-dangerous Zidane fed Willy Sagnol on the wing and then slipped into the area. Sagnol's cross was headed into the top of the net when the Italian keeper soared high to knock it over.

By then, the sea of blue supporters for both teams seemed as exhausted as the players. The crowd let out a short gasp, and then it was back to the tense and tentative action.

Nasty foul

Zidane used his head again in the 110th for a nasty foul, a butt directly into the chest of Materazzi, earning the France captain a red card.

"Zidane being sent off changed everything because even in extra time the Italian team was waiting for only one thing and that was penalties," France coach Raymond Domenech said.

"I don't know what Materazzi said to Zidane. All I know is that the man of the match is Materazzi," Domenech added. "He got the equalizer and got Zidane sent off."

The match was supposed to be a glorious swan song for Zidane who had led France to its only World Cup triumph eight years ago and had vowed to retire after this tournament.

Despite the red card and his team's loss, Zidane won the Golden Ball award after he was adjudged the tournament's best player.

For the remainder of extra time, the fans whistled their displeasure. Both sides played nervous, sloppy soccer for 120 minutes, hardly befitting a World Cup final. There were far more mistakes than inspiration.

France's Thierry Henry went down in the first minute in a seemingly innocent collision with the impregnable Cannavaro. Henry stayed on the ground, clearly dazed, for two minutes before being helped off with an ice bag held to his head.

Terrific header

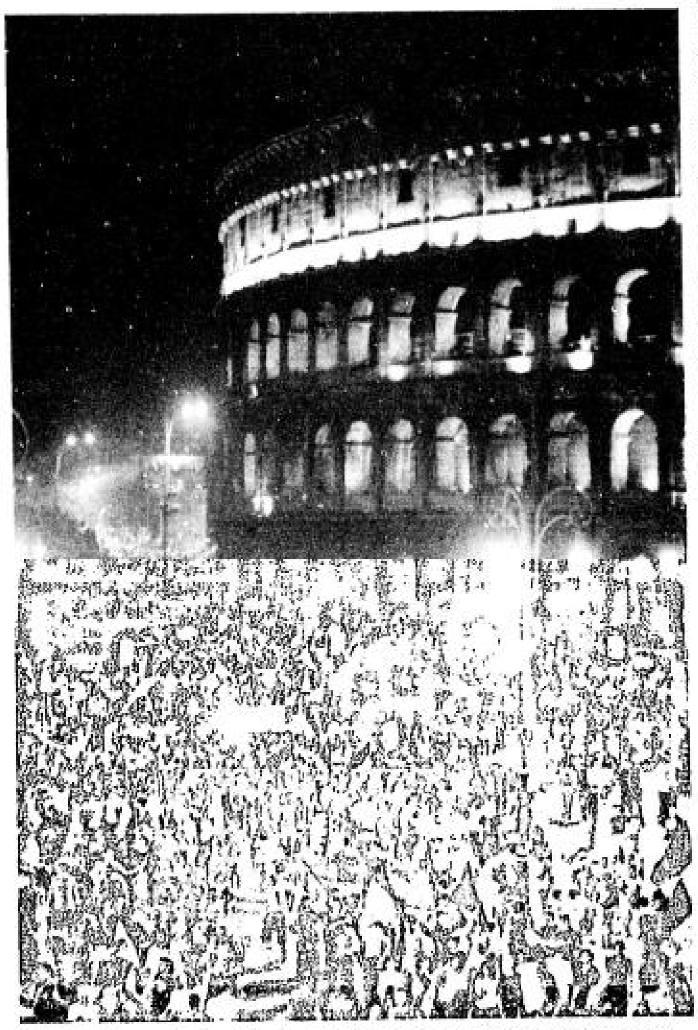
Henry soon came back and his first touch, naturally, was a header. It was a terrific one, too, falling at the feet of a breaking Florent Malouda.

Malouda stumbled—many might say dived—in the penalty area and Argentine referee Horacio Elizondo immediately signaled a penalty kick. Zidane, whose penalty beat Portugal in the semifinals, lobbed it right as Buffon dived the other way. The ball struck the crossbar and fell well inside the net in the seventh minute.

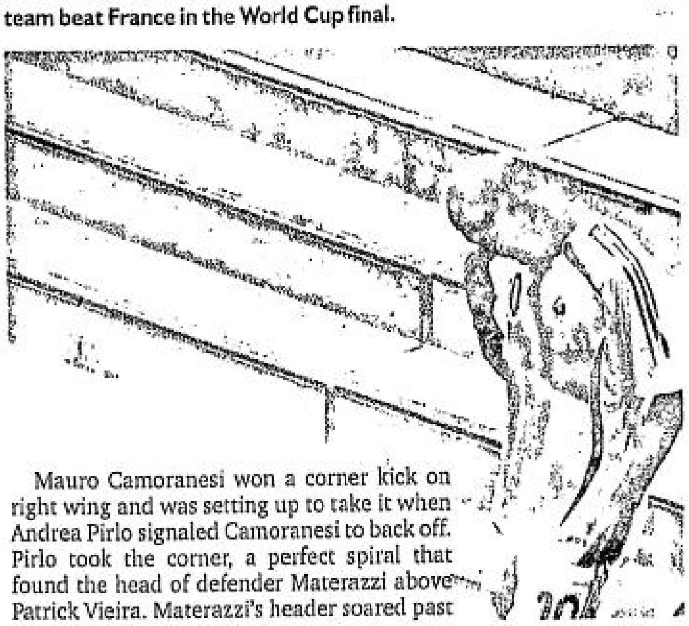
For the rest of the half, the French showed little of the flair that carried them this far. And Italy equalized with one of its strengths—a set piece.

Mauro Camoranesi won a corner kick on right wing and was setting up to take it when Andrea Pirlo signaled Camoranesi to back off. Pirlo took the corner, a perfect spiral that found the head of defender Materazzi above Patrick Vieira. Materazzi's header soared past goalkeeper Fabien Barthez.

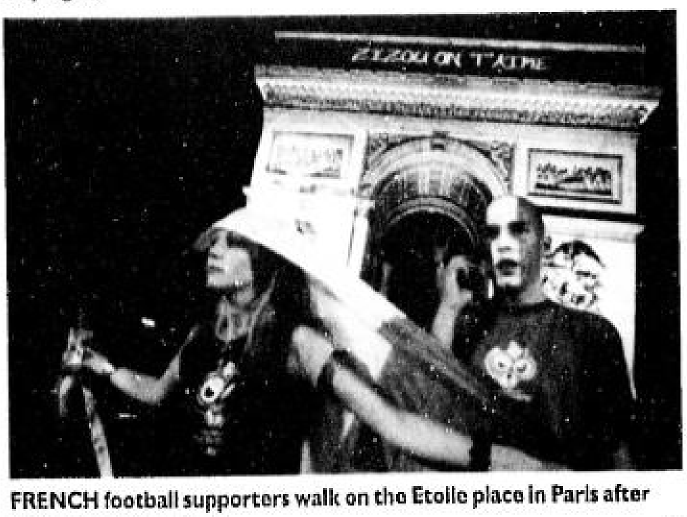
Henry had the best opportunity in the second half, but Buffon lunged left to hand-save the right-footed drive. France got a scare, too, when Zidane fell on his right arm and shoulder and needed freeze spray applied before staying in. *AP*



ITALIAN fans celebrate in front of the Coliseum in Rome after their team beat France in the World Cup final.



FRENCH midfielder Zinedine Zidane leaves the pitch after being sent off for a headbutt offense.



FRENCH football supporters walk on the Etoile place in Paris after their team lost to Italy.

Yes, RP can kick out sorry state of football, if only ...

SOCCER belles play in a rain-soaked field on the Ateneo campus during the festival of football.

REM ZAMORA

From page A1

frontation on the pitch in Germany akin to the war between Athens and Sparta.

Organizers of the Ateneo event—funded by a popular cake maker—had capitalized on the quadrennial in Germany, hoping that the football fever that gripped most of the world would implant a virus or stir one alive and infect a people that only think of basketball.

Tons can be said about the children's commitment and the support they got from the sedate crowd of several thousand—mostly lovely young mothers and the players' siblings.

Alas, both are lacking in the way football as a sport in the Philippines is run through the years that has led to its sorry state today.

A survey conducted by the INQUIRER's bureaus across the Philippines shows that football has become—except for a few places in the Visayas—nothing more than a weekend pastime for a few enthusiasts.

But the prognosis that it is in the throes of death is grossly exaggerated.

Potential at grassroots

"We have potential players at the grass roots," says Victor Fornillos, president of the Football Sociedad de Leyte. "We want to hold clinics but lack of funds holds us back."

It is a lament heard across the country—from the Cordillera mountains in the north to the coastal fishing villages in the south. But the sport thrives.

Glenda Mendoza, 42, recalls she was part of the "shoeless soccer belles" from Baguio who trained barefoot and yet won seven national ladies football championships in the early 1980s.

Individual initiatives aren't lacking.

Since he came to Legazpi City in Albay in 1992, Iranian Taghi Kashef has been conducting a training program in the city and outlying barangays.

The football philanthropist gives shirts, shorts, shoes and shin guards, as well as allowances for players taking part in provincial and regional competitions. Last year alone, he spent P700,000 developing football fields in Barangays Rawis, Homapon and Banquerohan.

"We should learn from our friends in Latin America, where the primary requirement in the training of world-class players is the establishment of a football field where they can practice, play and be coached," he says.

The efforts of this Iranian, who came to the Philippines in 1977 to study dentistry at the University of Sto. Tomas and never left, have paid off.

The Legazpi team has been winning gold medals in local tournaments. In April, it won the first Football Federation of the Philippines (FFP) Southeast Luzon Regional Championship in the under-17-years-old bracket.

Football revolution

"This is just the beginning," says the 53-year-old Kashef, who adds he hopes to start a football "revolution" in the Philippines.

In Negros Occidental, Rep. Carlos Cojuangco is offering P50,000 to football clubs that could bring in 10,000 members.

There are 33 such clubs in the province, through which the son of business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco hopes football would be developed by self-sustaining communities.

Cojuangco ticks off figures. If each club brings in 10,000 members, there will be a fan base of a quarter million in the province alone, he says.

"We have to build clubs that will live forever because of grass-roots support and dedicated members, clubs like Manchester United in England, Real Madrid in Spain, AC Milan in Italy," he says.

The province is hosting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) football championships in Bacolod City in November and expects to draw crowds to what used to be known in the region as the prestigious Tiger Cup.

Where there's popular support, football thrives, as in Barotac Nuevo. Residents call the town in Iloilo the "the Football Capital of the Philippines."

"At one time, 15 of the 20 players in the national team were Barotacnons," says engineer Duffie Botavara, head of the local football association.

Botavara says an FFP program conducted with education officials mainly accounts for the locals enthusiasm for the sport.

Many Barotacnon children are part of "Kasimbulan," the FFP's development project for children aged 6 to 12. Under this effort, football clubs teach the sport in schools, train teachers, hold tournaments, and select a pool of players for further training.

The town got a boost in 2003 when the FFP and Fifa, the international football federation, put up a P10-million training center at Barangay Tabucan, the only one of its kind in the country.

Not doing enough

Some say, however, that the FFP is not doing enough and want to know where it is spending its money, including a $200,000 annual contribution from Fifa.

"We don't get enough support," says Gerry Salas-Romero, president of the Davao Football Federation. He cites as an example an FFP directive that says his group should share transportation expenses to national competitions.

Romero also says the biggest beneficiaries of FFP training programs are the Manila coaches and players who get international exposure.

One strident critic of FFP is Jose Vito Borromeo, head of the National Capital Region Football Association.

"I cannot tell you the sorry state of football in our country in less than a thousand words," says Borromeo.

Borromeo cites the steady decline in the Philippines' ranking in Fifa—from 168 in 1997 to 191 this year in a field of 205 countries. He says that in the Asian federation, the country is 42nd on the totem pole out of 45 members.

"Our situation is serious, and unless we replace those who rule national football today with a progressive group, our slide is bound to continue," he says.

FFP president Johnny Romualdez, 65, a business manager and consultant, shrugs off Borromeo's tirade.

"We have not advertised the growth of football, but I have seen it," he says.

People in almost all provinces play the game—in school competitions, in fiestas. He says the biggest leap has been made in Mindanao, where the German NGO GTZ also has a sport development program as part of a peace initiative in troubled areas in the region.

The FFP, Romualdez says, has spent some P50 million over the last seven years, and distributed 50,000 balls to teams in schools all over the country. He says the money FFP gets isn't enough.

In Switzerland, as elsewhere in the more progressive soccer-playing countries, "Le Fut" gets corporate financing. Credit Suisse, one of the Alpine country's biggest banks, provides funds for development of the sport and its participation in international competitions.

In the Philippines, scions of the old Spanish families attempted to put football on the same pedestal as basketball in the '60s and '70s.

The late Andres Soriano Sr., then president of San Miguel Corp., brought from Spain six or seven young soccer players to develop local talents, recalls Fr. Joaquin Valdez.

The 61-year-old Valdez says that shortly after he arrived at the UST, he joined four foreigners in a local team that played a visiting Chinese squad in 1974 before a cheering crowd of 20,000 at the Rizal Stadium—something unheard of in Manila in recent years.

During those days, teams were evenly composed of Tisoys, Chinoys and Pinoys.

It's been downhill since, not because teams are now 90 percent Filipinos.

"There are no incentives, no encouragement and no motivation," says the Spanish Dominican priest. "There are no people who really love soccer. Everything, including the private sector, emphasizes basketball. The companies, they invest in basketball. Everything is basketball, basketball, basketball. Nothing happens in other sports," he says in exasperation.

Basketball glory

Unfortunately, basketball is a game where Filipinos cannot excel in international competitions. There is an inherent height disadvantage. It can no longer summon national pride, as it did during the days of Carlos "The Great Difference" Loyzaga. Those days are gone forever.

Fr. Adolf Faroni, 84, an Italian Salesian priest who came to Manila in 1971, has another take on what's wrong with Philippine football—"the laziness of the people ... it takes time and effort to organize it."

Unstated is the constant plodding, the patience and perseverance required in the game, the imagination to create situations to score a goal.

"Our team is a true team," France coach Raymond Domenech said before the venerable Zidane lost his cool in the World Cup final in Berlin against Italy on Sunday. "It's not individuals. Everybody does it together, and everybody is able to sacrifice themselves."

Could the same be said of the Miami Heat, essentially carried by the Shaq-Dwayne tandem?

The quadrennial in Germany showed how deeply national teams touched their supporters—the delirious outpouring of joy in victory, massive grieving in defeat.

One football coach, Robert Manlulu of Ateneo, advances one theory why soccer cannot go very far in this country—the "crab mentality." He alludes to what James Fallows calls a "damaged culture."

Manlulu points to divisions among administrators of the sport. He rues that football is down by the wayside although it is a sport that Filipinos can easily excel in.

If the Brazilians can bring their samba to their game, Filipinos can do the same wonders with their cha-cha—not the political variety trivialized by Fidel Ramos and Jose de Venecia.

"Filipinos love to dance, they're very agile," says Romualdez. "Not being very tall helps. We could be very strong and aggressive."

Soccer could bring this squabbling nation together, bring together individuals and communities, bridge cultural and ethnic divides. It could be part of something modern and global.

Somewhere over the rainbow

Les Bleus and the glory the "rainbow team" brought to France on the football field are a repudiation of Jean Marie Le Pen's racist and xenophobic rhetoric.

People complain that there are no fields to play on in the Philippines.

Traveling across Africa, I've seen barefoot Sudanese children scrimmage with abandon on a dusty field littered with camel dung beside a souk in Khartoum. Strategically placed rocks are the only signs of a goal post.

Children dribble, practice nimble moves and deft passes, do the scissor kick on a park behind my apartment block in Geneva, where I used to live. They bounce a ball endlessly on their heads or bang it on a wall. You see toddlers already kicking a ball straight and true to their fathers.

Will the Philippines be able to send a team to the World Cup, as Togo and Trinidad and Tobago—both dots on the map—did in Germany?

"The day will come, if we continue to build the base, to start them young," says Romualdez. "It will come." *With reports from Musong R. Castillo, PDI Sports; Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Joselle dR. Badilla, PDI Mindano Bureau; Carla P. Gomez, Chito A. Fuentes, Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau; Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and Mel Lawrence de Guzman, PDI Research*

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Measured response

EDITORIAL

NORTH KOREA APPARENTLY WANTED TO GET THE world's attention when it test-fired six missiles on the United States' Independence Day last week—and it got it all right, plus the condemnation of many nations. But while Pyongyang raised geopolitical tension, it failed to demonstrate that its long-range missile technology had advanced in the past few years. The long-range Taepodong-2 that was designed to reach the US West Coast came down only 40 seconds after takeoff.

While last week's test-launching could not possibly have posed any immediate threat to its major "addressee," the US, it underlined the continuing challenge to world peace and security being posed by the reclusive state of North Korea. And while the White House called the test-firing "a provocation," US President George W. Bush has made a relatively calm, measured response to it. He has asked the leaders of China and Russia, two of the countries closest to North Korea, to support him in making a tough response to North Korea's provocative action. He also asked the leaders of Japan and South Korea to join the US in sending the common message that North Korea would not "be rewarded for ignoring the world" and that it "would be isolated if it continued to do so."

Toward the end of the week, Bush ruled out bilateral talks with North Korea, saying that the United States would make its response to Pyongyang through the United Nations Security Council. He said the diplomatic route might be "slow and cumbersome," but what was important was for Kim Jong Il, who is often portrayed by the Western media as "an irrational, nuclear-obsessed madman," to hear the world "speak with one voice."

Despite Bush's ruling out bilateral talks and the expectation that North Korea could not be persuaded to return to the six-party talks, the possibility remained that other venues might be open for discussion with Pyongyang. On Friday, Christopher Hill, the top US envoy for North Korea, said the United States was supporting China's proposal for informal talks to reengage the reclusive state.

In the United Nations, the US and Japan put on the table a draft resolution calling for sanctions on North Korea's weapons program, but China said it would not support the move. The resolution demands an end to missile development by North Korea and urges other countries to take steps to prevent the transfer to or procurement from North Korea of any missiles or materials and technology as well as the transfer of financial resources to end users involved in or supplying North Korea's missile or weapons of mass destruction program.

Toward the end of the week also, Japan introduced a draft Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions on North Korea for the test-firing and also order a halt to its development of ballistic missiles. But here Japan could be blocked by China and Russia which are opposing sanctions. Still, a way may be found to drop the sanctions from the resolution and retain a condemnation and an order for Pyongyang to stop developing and testing missiles.

North Korea has threatened to test-launch more missiles and said it would take even stronger action if test opponents exerted pressure on the country. With the test-firing, Kim Jong-il certainly has got the world's attention and has to be taken seriously despite the caricature that the Western media have painted of him. North Korea has one of the poorest economies in the world but it has the fifth largest army, with 1.2 million soldiers and 7.7 million reservists. (The soldiers are the best-fed people in a nation that has about 21 million starving and malnourished civilians.)

It is well that the usually gung-ho Bush has avoided the temptation to tread the unilateral path and is instead asking for an international consensus. The West will have to avoid the temptation to overreact because it cannot predict what the response of Kim Jong-il will be.

Last week's test-firings by North Korea are surely a cause for global concern, but fortunately, world leaders have not responded with warlike statements and actions. The UN Security Council offers one venue for the resolution of the issue. If formal six-party talks cannot be reconvened, then six-party informal talks, as suggested by Hill, could be resorted to. It is certainly reassuring that the usually hawkish Bush is taking a measured response, and that various avenues are being explored to insure the peace and security of the world.

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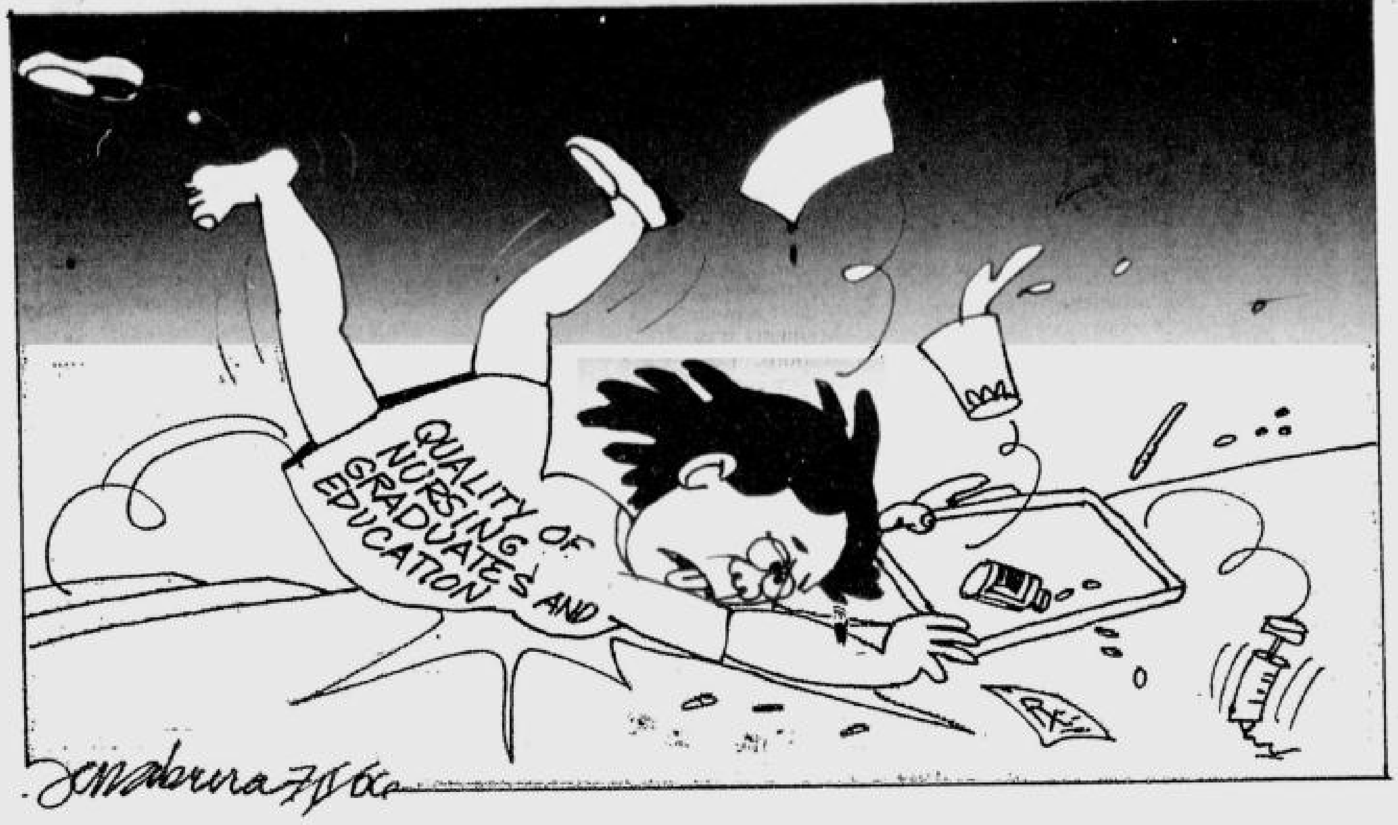
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Rose-tinted data

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING squashed by a reckless driver, speeding late at night through poorly lit intersections? Pretty high, says the Asian Development Bank in a study of road safety among Association of Southeast Asian Nations members. But the likelihood that you won't even appear as a statistic in official traffic accident records is higher.

Also, the roads here are more lethal for kids, says the ADB's "Country Report No 7: Philippines." Children between the ages of 1 and 4 years accounted for the largest number of victims among "the most vulnerable group": pedestrians. "About 25 percent to 40 percent of all pedestrians killed or seriously injured were under 15."

On paper, "the Philippine accident rate is about 6 fatalities per 10,000 vehicles." That makes us look good among Asean nations. The low victim head count has, in fact, lulled authorities into complacency, the report notes. But newspaper and broadcast reports show these up as smug assumptions.

"In reality, there are great discrepancies between statistics and the actual situation," the report says. "In 2003, the police reported only about 900 fatalities." But that same year, "about 9,000 fatalities could be attributed to road traffic accidents," the United Nations Fund for Children asserted in its National Injury Survey.

The Unicef study covered 90,500 households, randomly selected from barangay to regional level. It concluded that over 783,000 pile-ups occur yearly. In over 144,000 instances, people were injured severely. Another 630,000 got off with bruises, black eyes, dented cars—and the scare of their lives.

A similar divergence appears when police statistics are stacked alongside hospital data, the ADB study notes. Health figures tracked a sharp climb in traffic accident fatalities over a five year period: from 1,212 to 3,865. The corpses notwithstanding, police statistics show there's a downward trend.

"There are no specific steps for reporting accidents," the report notes. In Metro Manila as well as in towns, police present at accidents bring the victims to the hospital and inform medico-legal departments.

But what if there's no policeman around? Then, "reporting accidents from hospitals to police headquarters and to the PNP is seldom done." Hospital records are not reconciled with police records. Computerization is just beginning. And staff is short.

As a result, "the level of accuracy of reporting traffic accidents varies from region to region… This also leaves traffic investigation reports on minor injury accidents and property damage on the shelves of different police districts."

Two traffic accident reporting and analysis systems, one at the Department of Public Works and the other at the Metro Manila Development Authority, still have to be coordinated. "An efficient road accident data system is simply not yet available in the Philippines."

In a separate 2005 study, the ADB estimates the toll now tops $1.9 billion per year. At current exchange rates, that's roughly P100.7 billion—equal 2.6 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The problem is unlikely to go away. The number of vehicles, careening on inadequate clogged roads here, increases at 4.4 percent yearly, roughly double the increase in population. Over a five year period, the number of motorcycles caromed from 604,746 to 1.61 million. "Motorcyclists are a growing problem."

Most accidents occurred in Metro Manila. Northern Mindanao came next, followed by Bicol, then Western and Central Mindanao. Ilocos, Cagayan Valley and Southern Tagalog had the least.

More than a third (35 percent) of the smashups occur at intersections. Most happen at night. Contributing factors include poor street lighting, lack of warning devices, and disregard of traffic signals during late night or early morning hours.

The "loose nut behind the wheel" is responsible for one out of every four mishaps. The other causes are: fracturing speed limits, 17 percent; overtaking and mechanical defects, 12 percent. Drivers doze off, had one drink too many, suffer "reduced visibility due to smoke belchers and night blindness among the malnourished."

"The first step is to keep unskilled drivers off the road," the ADB says. "The current licensing system is so lax that people need not learn how to drive before getting a license." Standards for licenses should be tied up to driver education.

"Some aspects of Filipino culture … often go against strict law implementation, self-discipline and courtesy," the report points out. "These cultural factors tend to infect many agencies, as well as the behavior of drivers and pedestrians."

Lack of spine will not ban dilapidated smoke-belching vehicles, clear sidewalks of vendors, tear down distracting billboards or clear ad-hoc cafeterias squatting on pedestrian paths.

"A trial-and-error method of solving traffic problems, which is often undertaken in the Philippines, must therefore be avoided." That would come from better use of public institutions, like the University of the Philippines National Center for Transportation Studies, and private groups like the Automobile Association Philippines.

"A more powerful national safety committee is needed," the report adds. Rosy statistics "cannot simply cover up for the failure of the transportation system."

Original sin

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JAMBY MADRIGAL, OF COURSE, IS PERFECTLY capable of defending herself from the irascibly silly Raul Gonzalez who means to pin her down on charges of treason. But frankly, I don't know why she shouldn't just say: "What crime have I committed? It's not as though I called up a Comelec commissioner during the counting of votes and excused that as a lapse in judgment."

Indeed, I don't know why that shouldn't be the standard answer of everyone the Newspeak Department of Justice and Newspeak justice secretary means to hale to court on any charge, trumped-up or not.

I don't know why Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez shouldn't say: "What crime have I committed in filing an impeachment rap against GMA? It's not as if I called up Garci, demanding that he make me win by a million votes, and called it a lapse in judgment."

I don't know why the Batasan 5 shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed in showing solidarity with the soldiers who wanted to withdraw support from GMA? It's not as if we called up a Comelec commissioner known for telling the world he learned the tricks of his trade from Leonardo Perez, Marcos' Comelec chief who did not know how to count, wanting to know how he was making '*pagpapataas sa inyo Ma'am.*' And called that a lapse in judgment."

I don't know why Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed in appearing before the Senate to tell the world what we know about the conduct of elections in the south? It's not as if we pestered Garci, who seemed harassed and peeved at some point by the sheer persistence or *kakulitan* of the calls, demanding to know if there was any danger of the cheating being found out and being grateful to be told that '*Namfrel ho* sympathetic *na sa atin.*' And called that a lapse in judgment."

I don't know why everyone, Right, Left, Center, or Nowhere, accused of subversion, rebellion, sedition, desertion, treason, or whatever "on" the irascibly silly Newspeak justice secretary can think of, shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed in trying to oust someone pretending to be the president? It's not as if we called up the Father of all Liars, to complement our own Mother of all Liars, and agreed that he should kidnap an impoverished public school teacher, or hold his family hostage, just so she could not tell the world of the cheating that she saw and thereby teach that world a thing or two about honesty. It's not as if we did that and said, ah, I lapsed in judgment, I … am … sorry."

I'm still waiting for the irascibly silly and Newspeak justice secretary to charge me with something, anything, because that is what I'd love to say to him.

In this month when we mark the first anniversary of GMA's "lapse in judgment apology" to the nation, it is good to remember that there is an unforgivable crime in this country that remains unpunished. The "Hello Garci" episode is the Original Sin. The "Hello Garci" episode is the sin to eclipse all sins. Thenceforth, anything and everything become permissible. You have someone caught on tape cheating the hell out of an election, and indeed being culpable for a host of other sins, among them conspiracy to kidnap, and that is paraded as a lapse in judgment, then every other crime in this country becomes a lapse in judgment.

Of course Madrigal et al. have every reason not to justify their actions as a lapse in judgment because what they have done is no crime at all. What they have done is a service to the people. Seeking the path of peace instead of war is not a crime, particularly when the war has "wag the dog," written all over it. Filing an impeachment charge against a usurper is not a crime at all, particularly if you are a bishop and you believe that it's a sin to tell a lie, or be governed by one. Appearing before the Senate, in contravention of an illegal, immoral and totally venomous order to cease and desist, in order to make the truth known, is not a crime, particularly if you are a soldier who believes in duty, honor, and all the things soldiering at its best stands for.

My advice therefore more properly applies to people who are accused of evading taxes, notably the entertainers, whose pictures are splashed all over the front pages of newspapers to embarrass them because they are still capable of being embarrassed. I don't know why they shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed in not declaring our income? It's not as if we called up the Serpent who speaks with a forked tongue or a thick accent and suggested that he throw away the ballot boxes where the voters have declared their preferences."

My advice more properly applies to the forgers and con men and the petty hustlers that congregate in the fringes of city hall and every other government office offering their dark and shadowy services. If they are caught, I don't know why they shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed? It's not as if we called up the Beast that goes by many names and many faces and asked that he manipulate and falsify and deceive and otherwise unleash lies and untruth upon the earth."

My advice more properly applies to rapists who, until government made a show of abolishing the death penalty in time for GMA's audience with the Pope, were first in line to have poison flow in their veins. I don't know why they shouldn't say: "What crime have we committed? We just raped one person, we did not rape a nation."

If you are a Christian, you believe that being born with original sin, you will go to hell or purgatory (I forget which) when you die unless you are baptized. In soul as in body, in religion as in politics, in heaven as in earth, there is no end of ways to get baptized. How to expunge the original sin called "Hello Garci"?

Get angry. Go figure.

Magdalo arrest weakens impeachment case

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE ARREST A FEW DAYS AGO OF SIX MILITARY officers belonging to the Magdalo group and two civilian sympathizers, who were found in possession of a huge cache of firearms and bombs allegedly intended to bomb the Batasan during President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address can only weaken the second impeachment case against her. One of the grounds cited for her impeachment is her alleged abuse of power in issuing Proclamation 1017. The arrest of the Magdalo group strengthens the administration's argument that it had to issue the proclamation to protect itself against enemies of the state. This seems to doom the second impeachment case.

* * *

The meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines last weekend was significant in view of recent developments. The decision of Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez to file a new impeachment complaint against President Arroyo has triggered a clamor for a review of church and state relations and how the separation between the two should be observed. Iñiguez's decision was anchored primarily on what the anti-GMA forces claim to be the need to ferret out "the truth" about whether GMA really won the 2004 elections. Interestingly, at the annual meeting of the Bishops Businessmen's Conference last Friday, a paper titled "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Election Irregularities," whose preliminary report was first issued at the bishops' plenary assembly last January 2005, resurfaced. This paper seems to contradict Iñiguez's recent move, leading many people to wonder what he's up to.

* * *

In their July 10-11, 2004 plenary assembly, just two months after the May 2004 elections, the bishops decided to form an ad hoc committee to study reports of disenfranchisement of voters and allegations of irregularities, including cheating. It was chaired by Iñiguez, with Msgr. Hernando Coronel and lawyer Jo Imbong as members. The committee submitted a preliminary report to the January 2005 plenary, based on a comparative study of Namfrel and Congress results. It compared the returns from 79 provinces and 19 cities and municipalities. In 92 areas, it noted that Namfrel provincial and city/municipal data were "not far from Comelec figures," but it noted disparities in six other areas, all of them in southern Mindanao.

* * *

But the most significant thing about the Iñiguez report is that it "affirms previous CBCP pronouncements regarding the May 2004 national elections." Recall that the CBCP said the elections were generally clean and reports of irregularities in some areas were not significant enough to affect the overall results. Seeking the "face of truth above legalities, technicalities and political allegiances," the Iñiguez report admitted that an "impartial quest for what really happened in the national May 2004 elections is elusive" as it's most difficult to find a source "with no political bias or partisan agenda."

The committee worked with the election returns (ERs) that are "the very heart of the Namfrel terminal report" based on 82.98 percent of the votes, as against the congressional canvass that used certificates of canvass. The committee affirmed what the BBC Task Force Katotohanan had stressed: "The 83 percent count completed by Namfrel can be considered clean."

* * *

Using extrapolated Namfrel data, the committee stated that while there were "indicators of vote padding," largely in the Muslim areas of Mindanao, "GMA won," although it found it "impossible that her lead over her main rival is more than a million votes." The committee arrived at this conclusion after noting that the extrapolated Namfrel lead of GMA over FPJ was 562,544 votes, while in the final Comelec tally GMA's lead, minus the overseas vote, was 1,063,772 votes. The committee noted the difference of 501,217 votes between the two counts, which it maintained was likely to be the true margin of GMA over FPJ.

* * *

The question now is, if in the study of the committee GMA really won, albeit by less than the million her camp claims, is the bishop now setting this finding aside? If his complaint is centered on the allegations of vote-padding in the Muslim areas, this has gone on for decades and it ought to be addressed by electoral reforms. But to seek to unseat a president government on the basis of this and cause instability in the country is ridiculous. There is hardly any national politician who has not benefited from this evil practice.

* * *

Ma. Lourdes Cortes, president of Word Communicators Apostolate Inc., sent me a book written by my College of the Holy Spirit fellow alumna, Ma. Andrea Santos-Mendigo. Andrea, a well-known Marian devotee and chair of the Education Ministry of Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows, Quezon City, authored "Sacred Feminine, The Story of the Woman," which is a catechesis on the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Eucharist. She traces the divine plan to share the bounty of God outside the Blessed Trinity, whereby the Second Person, God's Word, would assume human nature by being born to a woman chosen before time began, Mary. As she noted, Mary embodies the Sacred Feminine because in her sinless and virginal womb the Word took flesh. She was also to become the Queen of Heaven and Earth, the Mother of us all.

What makes the book fascinating is that Mendigo develops some of the great legends of Mary such as her encounter with the Angel at Nazareth and her miraculous appearances at Guadalupe, Fatima and even Manila, where she was said to have intervened to protect the people against the Marcos forces during the Edsa Revolution. The book, costing P250, can be obtained at Totus Bookstore in Greenhills and outlets of Jesuit Communications and other stores. Or you can call 842-6523.

'Puntong Batangan'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FOR SOMEONE WHO SAYS SHE HAS "MISGIVINGS" about this publishing genre, writer-curator-cultural researcher-intellectual-activist Marian Pastor-Roces has just published a volume that charts a new course for what has sometimes been disdainfully referred to as the "coffee table book."

A coffee table book has come to be defined as a hardbound volume, usually large in format, printed on thick, coated paper, lavishly designed with scrumptious photos that are used more as décor and conversation pieces (resting on coffee tables instead of on bookshelves) rather than as sources of information or even good writing. That the writing is oftentimes good—though it can also be pretentious and self-indulgent—is regretful. For in this genre, style definitely trumps substance.

Maybe that's why Pastor-Roces, when approached by Batangas City officials about preparing a book to coincide with the opening of the city museum, felt reluctant to embark on the project. But, she says, "I also realized that I had so much rich material born of four years of research that I felt would be a shame to just let go to waste."

As the multi-hyphenated Pastor-Roces wrote in her foreword, she decided to take up the challenge if only to explore new, different directions for the medium. "Perhaps the picture book form can be shifted from the dynamics of promotion, and more toward the dynamics of critical reflection." Her "point of attack" would be language, and none was better suited than Batangas Tagalog, an oral language she describes as "crunchy, sharp and feral," or as she puts it in Batangueño Tagalog: "*malutong, matalas at 'di timo.*"

* * *

THE BOOK is entitled "Puntong Batangan" (roughly, the Batangueño Accent), sub-titled "Katwiran at Dila Dine sa Batangas City (Accent, Polemic and Tongue: Batangas City)."

It's a coffee table book in shape and form, but wholly unexpected in its content, which includes lots of ravishing visuals, true, but also dense, complex, detailed, finely wrought analysis, reflection and information.

One puts down "Puntong Batangan" feeling intellectually and sensually sated, one's mind and eyes assaulted with so many facts and historical data. The archive photos alone are worth one's investment of money and time, a visual timeline that brings the past to vivid life.

The book celebrates and remembers Batangas City. But where conventional publishers might have chosen to massage the egos of the city fathers and prominent families by centering on the *principalia* and on the worthies who financed the city's growth, Pastor-Roces and her team instead uses an "outside-in" approach.

The first chapter is called "Puno't Dulo," variously translated as "Be-All and End-All, "Start and Finish," "Root and Nether." It begins literally with trees native to Batangas, particularly the *calumpang*. Early chroniclers observed the populace offering sacrifices at the foot of the *calumpang* tree, arising perhaps from the perception that divinities resided in the tree, which exuded rich and musky odors, particularly its flowers and sap.

From trees, the chapter explores the rest of the natural environment and moves on to the establishment of the city, including a detailed timeline of the events that led to the concentration of the population from outlying villages to coastal town center, the growth of the town, its total destruction and razing toward the end of World War II, and its rebuilding and prosperity as a city. It also pays homage to prominent citizens, including past and present city officials and proud sons, such as Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales.

* * *

GOING beyond chronology and geography, "Puntong Batangan" then explores aspects of history that have been, as the book puts it "buried and forgotten (*baon sa limot*)," as well as cultural signposts that are uniquely Batangueño.

Extremely rich and moving, illustrated by vintage photographs, handwritten letters, personal testimony and archive material is the chapter on the role of Batangueños during the Revolution against Spain and the Filipino-American War.

Pastor-Roces says Batangas is notable in that there is little feudal tradition in the province, with most residents owning a piece of land, allowing for the creation of a strong and vibrant—and independent-minded—middle class. Perhaps it's this independent streak (as well as a reputation for tough machismo and a quick temper) that put Batangas in the center of the revolutionary movement. It's no accident that Malvar, among the longest hold-outs battling the Americans, chose the mountains of Batangas for his stronghold.

A searing photograph shows a group of American soldiers atop a pile of bones—artifacts not of victims of wartime atrocities, but of a cholera epidemic, abetted, so Pastor-Roces writes, by such American military tactics as starvation and zoning.

* * *

THE BOOK'S pages are generously sprinkled with pithy folk sayings that, to the refined and "civilized" sensibility, sound crude and much too direct, but which exemplify the peasant's comfort with the earth and bodily functions. "*Lumura ka ng patingala, sa mukha tatama* (Spit with an upturned chin and you get it in the face)" is just an example.

It pays further homage to the language by explorations of the *kundiman* or love song, the *harana* tradition, the *awit*, the *bugtong*, the *dalit*, which survives to this day, and the *subli*, a dance that is the center of any popular celebration in Batangas, albeit in various versions.

"Puntong Batangan" is, in sum, a compendium of facts and lore, legend and poetry, witticisms and memories, riddles and rhyme, that is both a fond homage to and a critical conversation about a city and its people.

Mexico's next revolution

WORLD VIEW

Jorge Castañeda

IT SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT RIGHT-OF-center, liberal candidate Felipe Calderón will be Mexico's next president. He may not have won by more than a percentage point and his 36 percent of the votes is hardly a mandate. His opponents will challenge the results in the streets, the courts and the political arena, and he will face a strong, though divided, opposition in Congress. Still, winning is better than losing, and Mexico is better off today than it was yesterday, when many thought the left-of-center populist contender, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, would receive a thumping endorsement from the electorate.

Calderón means continuity; that's probably why he won, and that is what Mexico needs.

In the end, Mexico's voters did not fall for López Obrador's stratagem. His case was simple: Mexico is a basket case today, let's throw out the rascals responsible for it and replace them with leaders who will represent and help the poor—still half of Mexico's population.

Regardless of the fact that this description is largely, though not entirely, inaccurate, the voters decided that the last people they wanted to fix the mess were those who created it in the first place. López Obrador surrounded himself with former high-level officials of the Echeverría (1970-1976), López Portillo (1976-1982), De la Madrid (1982-1988), and Salinas de Gortari administrations. It simply didn't fly with the electorate.

Calderón's argument did. He basically argued that over the past 10 years, Mexico, while hardly a paradise, was on something of a roll: inflation came under control, growth began to pick up, poverty was being reduced, and lower interest rates made credit available to the lower middle class. And all of this came about without repression, human rights violations, uprisings, political assassinations, or runaway corruption.

According to exit polls, 60 percent of Mexico's voters who thought that things had improved over the past year voted for Calderón; 60 percent of those who approve of President Vicente Fox (who in turn has a 65 percent approval rate), chose Calderón as well.

Nonetheless the challenges he faces are enormous. Mexico today is victim of a gaping ideological divide that most other countries in Latin America have put behind them. The election was not over policies, simplistic or not, such as war or peace, lower or higher taxes, more or less public spending, how to combat poverty or create jobs, to permit or prohibit capital punishment, abortion, gay marriage, or whatever. The campaign was over Mexico's soul, over the highly abstract, partly imaginary, broad ideological themes of nationalism, separation of church and state, the market versus the state, law enforcement versus eradicating privilege and poverty, belonging to Latin America or to North America, poor versus rich.

Viewed from afar, such campaign themes might not have been a bad thing: after all, countries need these types of discussion every now and then. But in fact, the discussion was largely meaningless, because the policies that theoretically would have sprung from the electorate favoring one world-view or the other were either unviable or already in place. Calderón cannot hand education over to the Church, privatize Pemex (the state owned oil company) or abolish social anti-poverty programs, as his adversaries falsely claimed he would do. And López Obrador would not have been able to move Mexico away from the United States, revise Nafta, massively and overnight re-orient public spending, eliminate poverty, and create millions of jobs through unfunded infrastructure programs, as he said, and truly seemed to believe, he would do.

As in most cases, Byzantine ideological debates such as these lead nowhere, but they do crowd out meaningful policy discussions. Since debates over those policies did not take place, they will have to begin now, and inevitably they will further polarize a society that is already deeply divided.

Calderón will not only be plagued by this artificial ideological divide; he will also have to confront the same paralysis that Fox and his predecessor, Ernesto Zedillo, have encountered since 1997. Mexico's current institutions were designed and built for an authoritarian rule, not for democracy, and they worked while Mexico was governed by a single party, the PRI. When democracy came, everyone—Zedillo, Fox, this writer, and many more—thought that the same institutions would remain functional, despite a radically different context.

We were all wrong, and the new president must face the same challenge: not how to govern with these dysfunctional institutions, but how to replace them with something that works. This is the single most important challenge facing Calderón; designing and building new institutions should be his first priority.

Achieving, at long last, reelection of parliamentary representatives; calling a referendum to amend the Constitution; creating a hybrid, semi-presidential, semi-parliamentary system that will encourage the formation of legislative majorities in a three-party environment; allowing independent candidates to run for office, thus forcing party realignment; and abolishing the US-style campaign-financing, where air time is purchased instead of allotted, and which led to Sunday's election probably being, dollar for vote, the most expensive in the world. These are the most important and urgent reforms.

With these reforms, Mexico can finally begin to harvest the fruits of 10 years of stability and continuity—not a mean feat for a country which had previously had major crises in every decade since the 1960s. With the reforms, the urgently needed substantive decisions that will directly affect the lives of the Mexicans—energy, tax, and labor reform, the improvement of education, and poverty reduction—can be made. Without the reforms, the country will continue to plod along and, no matter how intensely people may feel about it, real change will remain impossible. *Project Syndicate*

Jorge G. Castañeda, a former foreign minister of Mexico, is a Global Distinguished Professor of Politics and Latin American Studies at New York University.

Fate at work

YOUNG BLOOD

Christine Angos

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

MY MEMORY OFTEN TAKES ME TO A SPECIAL EVENING A year ago. Physically raw and sluggish after a 16-hour flight, I came out of the John F. Kennedy Airport in soaring spirits. A wide-eyed me took in the breathtaking New York skyline, reveled in the crisp autumn air and pondered in awe how many seemingly unrelated events worked in perfect timing to get me there. It is a delicious recollection, the kind you tend to come back to when in need of comfort or cheer.

A few months before graduation, I was already applying for work. I made sure to attend job fairs and company talks. I took the written exams and passed all of them. Most of the companies on my priority list called to arrange an interview. I was on a roll.

Nothing prepared me for what happened next: none of these companies hired me. Apparently I had the grades but not enough extracurricular experience. For a while there, I was convinced that I had missed a lot in my education because I did not lead an organization, serve in the student council or join the pep squad.

In my defense, I told myself I was far from being a recluse. My out-of-classroom learning, I would realize later on, was not insufficient. My activities were simply not the type you would include in a résumé, but nonetheless they shaped me into a well-rounded, civic-minded individual.

My kindly alma mater took me in. My former professors saw through my lampoon of a teaching demo and ignored my apparent lack of leadership. And so I became a self-conscious instructor teaching elementary Chemical Engineering to kids my age, plus or minus a couple of years.

While I took this unexpected career opportunity as a major blessing, the frustration of not getting the jobs I most wanted wouldn't go away. I secretly pined to be a chemical technologist, a junior engineer, or even a management trainee. My friends who bagged those titles were earning twice my salary and wore hip clothes to hip places after work. Yes, they were on call even on Sundays and they complained of being too busy while I had all the free time in the world. And still, I felt cheated.

Looking back now, I would say that the hands of fate were busy at work. One ordinary day, a hard copy of an e-mail was handed to me.

"*Christine, para sayo 'to,*" a senior colleague told me like she were the Fairy Godmother personified. The e-mail was from a Filipino-American executive based in Long Island, New York, who was looking for young engineers to work in a family owned manufacturing company. Having nothing to lose, I posted a reply to the ad about two hours later. Half a dozen e-mails and one interview later, I was hired.

My family was overjoyed; the opportunity was the "lucky break" that would finally deliver us from the harsh grip of *walang kamatayang utang* (endless debt). Just like that, our prayers for a long-term solution assumed a credible form.

Our financial struggle began around the time of my puberty and as a teenager, I reacted adversely to the situation. Eventually though, I matured and thus became an ally to my parents who would never tell exactly how bad our financial condition was, perhaps to shield me against hopelessness. Now, working here in New York, I am able to somehow repay them and maybe build new kinds of hopes that we did not have the nerve to imagine before.

Had I been accepted to any of the companies in Manila I applied to, all this would not have happened. It would've just taken one nod from a human resources manager for me to be working with a company until now. I had been humbled by several rejections and had begun questioning my abilities, but there were also people who never lost their faith in me: my past and present colleagues.

The challenges did not end when I arrived in New York. But I had not expected smooth sailing anyway. After the initial wonder of seeing and doing things new and unfamiliar (the Big Apple doesn't lack for those), I felt the sharp bite of homesickness. Eventually, happy memories with dear friends and relatives became too much to dwell on. Case in point: hanging out in Starbucks used to be a treat (the coffee was expensive but still worth it for the two-hour, non-stop gossip that came with it). Here I can buy the tallest cup with loose change and somehow the coffee does not taste as good. Extend that analogy to shopping, watching last full shows, people-watching in the park, jogging, eating ice cream—virtually every fun activity—and that basically sums up my recreational life. Indeed it's not the things you do that matters most of all but who you do them with.

I am certain now that I had not known loneliness before New York. A phone call to our little (almost fully paid-for) home in Tacloban City makes the isolation more bearable because it reminds me that my loved ones are doing just okay. With their encouragement, I have started to become less of an emotional yo-yo. I have even made new friends, now quite aware that the hands of fate have not stopped working.

Christine Angos, 25, graduated from the University of the Philippines in Diliman with a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering. She now works as an application engineer for Charles Ross & Son Co. based in Long Island, New York.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Malicious

"It is incredibly idiotic and malicious to blame (the) so-called CPP purges for [the killings of activists] .... Bayan stands by its earlier pronouncement that the killings were the work of government-sponsored death squads."

—Bayan Secretary Gen. Renato Reyes's reaction to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno's statement that a purge within the Communist Party of the Philippines might have led to the murders of leftists.

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Leave Pacquiao to boxing

THIS WRITER TAKES PRIDE IN HAVING a world boxing champion in the person of Manny Pacquiao, a countryman. I admire his accomplishments in the field of boxing where he does best, and I am happy that a man of modest beginnings and means has achieved tremendous success and is enjoying as well the financial rewards that comes with it. He may be a sports great, a hero if you like, and he deserves our respect and admiration.

But to picture Pacquiao in a Rizal look-alike pose—as if, with his boxing heroics, he can replace the national hero on the pedestal reserved only for great Filipinos who have contributed with so much selflessness, even with their own lives, to promote a patriotic cause—may be doing some kind of injustice.

Pacquiao's success may inspire millions of our poor countrymen, who have been getting less and less in life from their government owing to its officials' incompetence, indifference and insensitivity to the plight of their impoverished small citizens; and thus have to rely on their own bare and sordid means to survive.

There were even some harebrained persons who suggested that Pacquiao should run for an elective post in his hometown, obviously because of his immense popularity. The suggestion is typical of the politics practiced by many in this country.

I remember a story where one of the most popular Filipino actors/comedians was asked why he never ventured into politics, unlike many of his colleagues in show business. His answer was, " I can if I wanted to, and I am mostly likely to win. But what if I won? What would I do there?" (He was graceful and honest enough to admit that he has no adequate knowledge in governance.) This reminds me of a line from "Dirty Harry," "A good man should know his own limitations."

We have so many clowns in politics who make the populace cry in frustration. After a Fifa World Cup game which Germany won through the heroics of one of its most popular national players, German Chancellor Angela Merkel was asked if she would like the player to join her party as a potential candidate. The head of state replied: "You see, he is doing excellently in football, it would be better for him to do what he does best and leave the job of governing to the politicians who do as well in governance."

I hope Filipinos would take a cue from Merkel.

—RAMON A. MAYUGA,
GeRMayuga@aol.com

Factual errors in Banal's column

CONRADO BANAL III'S JUNE 27 COLumn contained factual errors, as follows:

1. First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) filed a complaint-in-intervention in Civil Case no. 35 before the Sandiganbayan on Dec. 28, 1988 and not "after 20 years since the family came back from exile in the United States."

As stated in the complaint-in-intervention, FPHC asserts that the ownership of the shares could not have been lawfully transferred because FPHC's rightful owners were then in exile, their business illegally taken over through the use and abuse of power, pressure, threats and intimidation during the Marcos regime.

In 1996, the Supreme Court upheld the right of FPHC to intervene in the sequestration proceedings on the PCIBank shares held by Trans Middle East (Phils.) Equities Inc. (TMEPEI), since there was no final determination of true ownership.

When it was reported in the media that in October 2005, Martin Romualdez withdrew about P138 million in dividends of the shares in question—despite the fact that the shares were being held in escrow pursuant to an order of the Sandiganbayan—FPHC filed an urgent motion before the Sandiganbayan to require EPCIB to explain the reported withdrawal and—if indeed there was (were) such a withdrawal/s—to require the return of the amounts withdrawn.

2. The Lopez family was among the thousands of direct victims of the Marcos regime, and "their pre-martial law businesses" were taken over forcibly and without just compensation. Any purported sale agreements were only executed under grave duress.

3. The Lopez group does not owe EPCIB "at least P6 billion."

—CESAR Z. GOMEZ, vice president,
Corporate Communications,
First Philippine Holdings Corp.,
4/F Benpres Bldg., Exchange Road
cor. Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

Improper display of RP flag

THE PHILIPPINE FLAG IS BEING displayed improperly, I think, behind the rostrums of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate President, as well as in Malacañang and other government offices.

I was a Boy Scout in my youth, and I still remember our scoutmaster showing us (1) where to position the flag on a stage—on the viewer's left; and (2) how to position it horizontally on a wall—white triangle on the left, blue field on top and the red field below.

(3) When the flag is hung on a wall vertically, the blue field should be on the viewer's right and the red field on the left.

(4) The only time the red field is required to be on top of the blue field, or on the viewer's right, is when the country is at war.

The present practice of displaying the flag vertically with the red field on the viewer's right, I think, is a misinterpretation of the Flag Law. Or has the law been amended?

—AMADO R CABAERO,
amacabsenior@hotmail.com

EXPLOITED: President Arroyo presents Manny Pacquiao with a cake after his recent victory over Oscar Larios.

Fair game : the winner and the cheater

I am just a poor boy though my story's seldom told
I have squandered my resistance for a pocketful of mumbles,
Such are promises, all lies and jest,
Still a man hears what he wants to hear
And disregards the rest, hmmmm...
—"The Boxer," Simon and Garfunkel

BOXING IS A VERY AGGRESSIVE SPORT. In a world largely shaped by patriarchy and machismo, the power of the muscles matters much in order to win. Techniques and tactics tag along. Spectators shout and jump in jubilation whenever their player or bet punches the face of the opponent.

Whenever there is a boxing match for Manny Pacquiao, the country goes into a holiday mood! The bustling business and traffic of the metropolis suddenly stands still. Entire neighborhoods are hooked on the television because nobody wants to miss the action. Any disturbance is considered a misbehavior. Everyone stop, when Pacquiao is in the center of the ring, whoever his opponent might be.

. The Filipino people greatly rejoiced again at Pacquiao's recent victory over Mexico's Oscar Larios. He has become the nation's pride and people look up to him. Beyond the person is the story of how Pacquiao came to be. Pacquiao's story is typical of a poor Filipino boxer turned champion. He came from a humble family who tried his fortune at the ring and made it to fame, through pain, hardship and stern training. His victory is hard-earned, a product of rigid discipline, arduous preparation and great sacrifice. Thus, he deserves the nation's accolade. Whether this distinction will last forever or overnight, it remains to be seen. Boxers somehow are the property of their managers.

When I left my home and my family, I's no more than a boy.
In the company of strangers
In the quiet of the railway station, runnin' scared, laying low,
Seeking out the poorer quarters, where the ragged people go,
Looking for the places only they would know.
Li la li...

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, she who was born with a silver spoon in her mouth and who brags about her religiosity, brazenly cheated her way to Malacañang. She is again reaping the gains from the victory of Pacquiao. Without spending a single centavo, she is able to exploit Pacquiao's success for her own political gimmicks. This smacks of derision and arrogance. Ms Arroyo could have instead taken the opportunity to learn a great lesson from Pacquiao. But as a power-holder who does not have any sense of justice and truth, she cannot simply understand what the people appreciate and look up to. Certainly, they could not jubilate with Gloria whose victory is suspect. The Filipino people will only rejoice over and be satisfied with a fair game.

—NORMA P DOLLAGA,
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(Kasimbayan),
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Mature SC decision on live-in relationships

IN REACTION TO FR. RANHILIO Aquino's commentary (PDI, 7/5/06), I welcome the Supreme Court's landmark decision to uphold "live-in" relationships, depending on one's religion. The 9-5 vote reflected the Supreme Court's high level of maturity. It also upheld freedom of religion.

The Supreme Court justices wisely saw that a secular democracy like ours should never be retrofitted with narrow and "holier-than-thou" Christian mores. It should encompass the moral standards of every Filipino, Christian or non-Christian alike. Catholicism may be the majority religion, but this does not mean that the government is justified not to respect and tolerate the the marital and sexual practices of other sects, even if these are, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, immoral.

It should be "each unto his own beliefs"—one's marital practices may not apply to others. Does Aquino mean that all of us—Buddhists, Hindus, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims—just have to follow the Christian way?

—JOSE R CRUZ,
holyrambutan@gmail.com

INQUIRER
Philippine Idol
Saksihan: Judges, kikilatis sa magiging Idol ng Bayan.
The phenomenon begins. July 29, Saturday, 8 PM.
PHILIPPINE IDOL NA!
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Financiers of highway robs watched

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—AGENTS OF the Traffic Management Group (TMG) are closely watching a syndicate composed of Chinese nationals that has allegedly been financing the series of highway robberies in the Calabarzon region, a senior police official said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Joel Orduña, chief of the TMG-Calabarzon, said they suspected that the group of foreigners has links with hijacking syndicates in the region after a Chinese national was killed in an encounter between TMG operatives and suspected hijackers in Batangas province three weeks ago.

The suspect, identified as Chen Ge Huai Chua, was among the four suspects who traded shots with the traffic policemen in a far-flung village in Padre Garcia, Batangas.

He said the group was a faction of the dreaded Mejas highway robbery group, whose leader was arrested last year in Lucena City.

Orduña said their suspicion was bolstered by a recent anti-hijacking operation of the TMG in Angeles City in Pampanga wherein four Chinese nationals were arrested.

He said the Chinese nationals would contact the highway robbers, finance their "operations" as they "place their orders from the group."

"Based on the reports we gathered, the Chinese men act as financiers of the hijackers. They were also the ones who will sell the stolen items to their contacts," Orduña told the INQUIRER.

He said they believe that the slain Chinese national was inspecting the hijacked truck containing the boxes of Bear Brand milk worth P20 million when the gunfight took place.

He also raised concern over the sudden rise of hijackings in the Calabarzon region.

Orduña said the incidents of highway robberies had doubled in the first half of this year as compared to the same period last year.

In fact, the 14 reported hijackings from January to June this year matched the total number of hijackings documented in 2005.

Orduña said the Calabarzon police office even reported that there were actually 23 highway robbery incidents this year.

Most incidents happened in Laguna province where most of the industrial parks are located.

Of the 14 cases of hijackings, only two were considered solved, TMG records showed.

Orduña attributed the increase of hijackings in the current slack of the national economy and the alarming poverty in the region.

"Poverty is really a big factor. These days, people tend to go for instant money by committing crimes," he said.

Orduña likewise lamented the supposed lukewarm cooperation of trucking and hauling companies with the policemen.

He said most of the owners of trucks plying the major thoroughfares in Calabarzon were indifferent to their anti-hijacking projects.

He said the truckers had refused to install global positioning system gadgets in their trucks. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

DRYING AREA
An evacuee hangs washed clothes near an evacuation center in Juban, Sorsogon. Residents of the town were moved out of their homes following a series of minor eruptions and earthquakes around Bulusan Volcano.

Guard slain as 5 men take ₱1.9M from co-op

By Joey A. Gabieta and Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—A SECURITY guard was killed and a utility man was seriously wounded early Sunday when five men armed with knives robbed the office of an electric cooperative in Biliran province and escaped with P1.9 million in cash.

The police identified the fatality as Manuel Palconit, a security guard at the Biliran Electric Cooperative (Bilico) in Barangay Caraycaray, about 2 km from the capital Naval town, Biliran.

Palconit, 38 and a resident of Barangay San Isidro in Biliran town, suffered 10 stab wounds.

Ricardo Cabalquinto, 21 and Bilico's utility man, was in serious condition and was brought to a hospital in Tacloban City, Leyte for treatment of his nine stab wounds.

Five armed men went inside the Bilico office between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on Sunday and took about P1.9 million from the cooperative's main vault.

Two of the suspects were later arrested.

First to fall was Alberto Almano, 34 and a lineman of Bilico who was caught in his house in Barangay San Roque, Biliran town about 9 a.m. of the same day, said Senior Supt. Cesario Darantinao, Police Regional Office-Eastern Visayas information officer.

Darantinao said the second suspect Jonel Camero was arrested in his home in Barangay Atay, Caibiran town, 60 km from Naval town.

Police said Palconit allowed Almano, 34, to get inside the compound when the suspect told him that he was to get some equipment for repair works.

His four other companions were able to sneak into Bilico office through the back of the compound that had no perimeter fence.

Once inside, the suspects went to the radio room and stabbed Palconit and Cabalquinto. They forcibly opened the cooperative's main vault at the finance division office and took about P1.9 million both in cash and checks.

The suspects tried to open another vault that contained over P200,000 but failed.

The heist was discovered when Bilico general manager Marlon Roa decided to go to the office after nobody took his calls.

Anglican Church moved out to make way for gov't gym

BAGUIO CITY—ANGLICAN PARISHIONERS of Sabangan town in Mt. Province woke up on Sunday to discover that government engineers had literally pushed aside their mission church to make way for a government-financed gymnasium.

They claimed this happened even though a local court had already recognized the church's rights over the land.

Episcopal Bishop Joel Pachao, who oversees churches from Baguio to Zambales, said a government pay loader lifted the St. Peter's Mission Church of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines off its moorings at 1 a.m. on July 9, and shoved the whole building aside, destroying its walls, flooring and altar.

Visiting Episcopalian priests, led by Fr. Arvin Amayag of Bauko town, held Mass on Sunday morning inside the damaged church "as a sign of solidarity to protest the government's violence on our church," said Victor Ananayo, the diocese social council officer, in a telephone interview.

Simple church

"It's a simple church. It is made of wood, and has GI sheet for roofing, but it served 200 [Sabangan] parishioners here every day," he said.

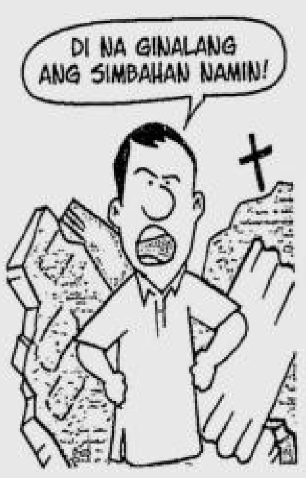
Pachao said the mission church has been entangled in a legal battle with the Department of Public Works and Highways to protect church property.

This came after the local government and the church's neighbors contested the 1958 deed of donation from one Pedro Aglipay that transferred a 1,900-square meter property to the Episcopal diocese.

They claimed that the Aglipay involved with the Episcopalians was fictitious, and Bishop Pedro Aglipay of the Philippine Independent Church actually donated the property to the town people.

Quoting documents that asserted the proprietary rights of the people of Sabangan over church grounds, the DPWH began constructing an open gymnasium there in 2005, said Leonardo Leyaley, DPWH district engineer for Mt. Province.

Leyaley, however, insisted that he never ordered the church demolished. "I have sent a team to investigate the incident, because we only heard about it this morning," he said.


DI NA GINALANG ANG SIMBAHAN NAMIN!

Ananayo said proceeding with the gymnasium construction is anomalous because the church won a forcible entry case against the DPWH when it first tried to clear church property in September 2005.

He sued Leyaley, but Judge James Kibiten of the municipal circuit court in Bauko, ruled on May 30 this year that the DPWH was never a party to the property dispute.

Church's rights

However, Kibiten acknowledged the church's rights over the land and ordered private citizens who built structures on church grounds to remove them.

The ruling did not make any reference to the gymnasium project.

Because the church failed to obtain an injunction against the project, Leyaley said the DPWH proceeded to build the gymnasium. The P4-million gymnasium is being financed by the pork barrel funds of Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez.

Ananayo said the diocese could rebuild the church but it would end up standing beneath the roof of the government gymnasium.

Government engineers and local contractors have started hammering together bleachers, and are cementing the grounds, he said.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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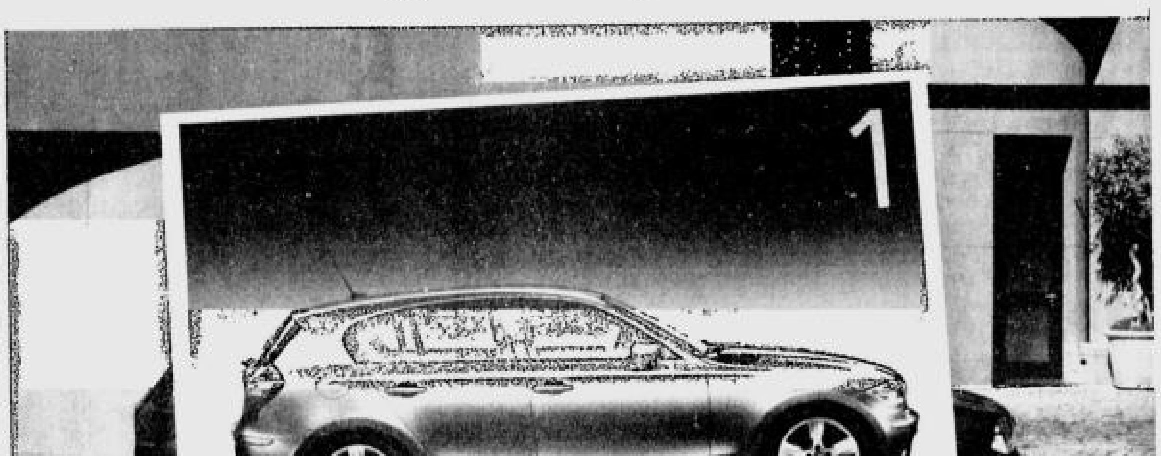

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Teachers feel dragged into Comelec poll scam

LEGAZPI CITY—ENCOURAGED by the recommendation of the Ombudsman to impeach Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, the president of a teachers' group here believed the Ombudsman's move could be the starting point of justice for teachers who served in the 2004 elections but whose signatures and handwritings have been tampered with and forged.

The Office of the Ombudsman has recommended impeachment for Borra for the voided P1.3-billion Mega Pacific election automation deal.

"I want the teachers' voice to finally be heard. Because of what happened the teachers were put in a bad light. What we always wanted was for justice to prevail and that the respect for the teachers' cause be put back," Fe Dolot, president of the Legazpi City Public School Teachers Association Inc. (Leciptea), said.

Last May, the members of the Leciptea were dismayed and disappointed by the Commission on Elections *en banc* ruling on May 29 proclaiming Mayor Noel Rosal's rival Michael Imperial as duly elected mayor of this city with 33,861 votes against Rosal's 31,673.

During the May 2004 elections the Legazpi Board of Canvassers declared Rosal winner with 44,277 votes against Imperial's 33,275 votes.

But Rosal's 14,067 votes were invalidated by the Comelec Second Division composed of Florentino Tuazon and then commissioner Meloh Sadain, whose term of office expired early February.

The Comelec affirmed the division's ruling on May 29 even as Rosal had a pending petition for certiorari with the Supreme Court.

After the release of the Comelec ruling, teacher-members of the Leciptea branded it as an affront to their dignity as teachers because it would cast doubts on their honesty and integrity, implying that they took part in cheating in the 2004 elections.

The teachers also decried the Comelec's failure to hear their side before coming up with its ruling.

"We are holding the truth about the 2004 elections. The election results the teachers came up with were the truth. We can never accept that the truth be twisted or altered," Dolot said.

Dolot added that because of what happened, the almost 400 teacher-members of the Leciptea are thinking of no longer rendering their service as members of the Board of Election Inspectors this 2007 elections.

"We are thinking twice if we will still serve in the 2007 elections. On my side, I am resolved not to serve. Other teachers share that intention also. But we will see. It depends on the justice we will get," she said.

Currently, Rosal still owns the disputed mayor's seat as the Supreme Court's grant of his appeal for a temporary restraining order on the Comelec ruling favoring Imperial is still in effect. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Army execs deny illegal deductions in troop pay

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—MILITARY officials have denied making illegal deductions in the monthly allowance of more than 700 government soldiers guarding the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway Project (SCTEP) in Bataan, Pampanga and Tarlac, the project's security chief said.

"Verification made revealed that the amount of P700 is being deducted from the allowance of SCAAs [Special Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units Active Auxiliary] every 15th and 30th of the month solely for the purpose of their consolidated mess (food supply)," said Edgar Pattaui, operations officer of the project's security department.

Pattaui gave that explanation to Bases Conversion Development Authority president Narciso Abaya in a July 5 memorandum.

Complaint

Abaya, who ordered an investigation into the alleged irregularity, furnished the INQUIRER a copy of the memorandum on Friday.

The probe stemmed from a complaint filed by Redgie Cruz, a SCAA personnel who resigned on June 3. Cruz, a native of Bulacan, disclosed the problem to the INQUIRER on June 29 in a bid to bring the matter to higher authorities.

Pattaui said the concept of "consolidated mess" was "fully explained and was agreed by the SCAAs."

"Since their detachments/patrol bases are situated in far-flung areas, it (consolidated mess) will save time and effort as against individual messing. Likewise, buying provisions in bulk entails lower cost that generates funds for other items," he said.

According to Col. Alberto Dinopol, Task Force SCTEx commander, the SCAAs assigned to the project get a monthly allowance of P6,000. A total of 372 SCAAs complement the 352 soldiers guarding the 94-km expressway project and their allowance are drawn from the BCDA, he said.

All troops belong to the 70th Infantry Battalion under the 7th Infantry Division of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan.

Cruz said that in March, Dinopol's man, Lt. Rey Dequito, deducted P1,500 from him and 17 other SCAAs detailed at the Bacong detachment in Hermosa, Bataan.

2 vouchers

Instead of getting a total of P27,000 in food budget, the detachment received only P16,800, he said. In the preceding months, the unit got food supplies in lieu of cash.

For the April payroll, Cruz said the guards were made to sign two vouchers stating that they each received P3,000 and another P1,000. What they actually got was P2,000 only.

According to Cruz, they signed but under clarified that it was made under protest.

The incidents also happened in 20 other detachments, he said. "SCAAs and soldiers are afraid to ask or talk," he added.

When he asked where the rest of the money went, Cruz said Dequito gave this reply: "*Kalimutan n'yo na 'yun. Parang tulong n'yo na 'yun sa amin* (Forget about the money. Consider it your help to us)."

Reached by phone, Dequito confirmed the P1,400 deductions for food and that P10 was taken from that amount to cover expenses for gasoline, printer's ink and office supplies used in preparing the payroll. This was done because the task force had no budget for operations, he said.

"Nothing went to our pockets," Dequito told the INQUIRER. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

BERTH

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Fishing boats are moored at the port of Magallanes town in Sorsogon.

RP, Malaysia start 14-day exercises vs crimes, terror

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—The Philippine and Malaysian armies began here on Monday their 14-day military exercises, the eighth between the two countries since 1998.

The war games, called Land Malphi 08-2006, assembled 65 Malaysian Army officers and 95 Philippine Army officers for a battalion-sized training in offensive operations, Philippine Army chief, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., said during the opening rites here.

Gen. Tan Sri Dato' Sri Abdul Aziz Bin Hj Zainal, chief of the Malaysian Army, said the training would help improve the capability of troops in addressing "common issues in safety and security of borders" of the two countries.

Press conference

At the press conference, Esperon said the dispute over Sabah "was not an issue" being tackled by the two armies. He said Land Malphil "enabled Malaysia and the Philippines to contribute much in our thrusts for regional unity, security and peace as members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations."

The next bilateral exercises, Esperon added, would adopt more field training and focus on disaster response and humanitarian assistance.

Aziz told reporters he anticipated "no future conventional threats" because peace-building measures were being done within the region.

Next year's training, Aziz said, could deal with how to stop transnational crimes and terrorism. "We want a peaceful region," he told reporters.

Esperon said Malaysia has helped in working to bring stability to Mindanao by sending an international monitoring team as the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front try to seal the final stage of the peace negotiations there.

Fighting terrorism

Aziz said Malaysia has helped the Philippines in fighting terrorism through a "timely exchange of information."

Esperon said exchange was vital in the light of the "tie-ups" of terrorist groups like Al-Qaida, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Southern Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf Group. "More or less, we have a common knowledge of how they are tied together," he said.

The training, focused on conventional war setting in the Philippines, is to be confined at the Air Force City here. Participants will visit the Philippine Military Academy before the training ends on July 18.

Esperon said the contingent was not expected to travel in Mindanao.

Training

Maj. Gen. Juanito Cabayao, chief of the Philippine Army's training command, said the training would not use live bullets.

Esperon said the training cost the Philippine Army at least P3 million. Aziz said the expenditure on their side runs to about half a million Malaysian dollars.

The training was part of a memorandum of understanding between the two countries on Sept. 26, 1994. That agreement led to the creation of the Malaysian-Philippines military cooperation working group. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

RIGID CERTIFICATION

Tough rules hamper shift to organic farming

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Shifting from conventional to organic agriculture may be difficult in the Cordillera because the certification process and transition period could turn off many vegetable farmers, advocates at the Benguet State University (BSU) here said.

Prof. Jovita Sim of the BSU's College of Agriculture said certain aspects of traditional farming and the lack of guarantees for a stable market of organic products could further derail the farmers' decision to go fully organic.

"Farmers may find the cost and requirements of organic farming too heavy. The nonuse of commercial fertilizers for three years to make them eligible for inspection will also result in income decline," Sim said in a recent seminar on organic farming.

Organic products

The three-year period is required by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP), the only body authorized and accredited by the Department of Agriculture to certify organic products in the country.

The OCCP needs three to six months to complete the inspection of organic farms before it issues a certificate which costs P15,000 and is valid only for a year.

Before inspection, farmers must submit to the OCCP farm maps, crops and crop processing production plans and registration documents if the farmers involved are members of an organization.

Felipe Bacdayan, a BSU teacher and farmer, said the requirements, particularly the three-year ban on the use of commercial fertilizers, could discourage farmers from shifting to organic farming.

He said the one-year validity of the certification would run contrary to established farming practices and drain the pockets of farmers.

"It appears that the OCCP requirements were designed for organized and big farmers' groups. This is not the trend in the Cordillera," Bacdayan said.

Tomas Caoili, a farmer from Sablan town, shared the view. Most Cordillera farms are small and family-based, he noted.

Very rigid standards

"Undergoing certification individually would be taxing on their daily farming activities. The OCCP standards are very rigid," Caoili said.

Sim said the BSU had asked the center to allow regional certification boards, like state universities, to conduct organic products certification but following its standards.

Local institutions have better appreciation of local farming systems and are in a better position to convince vegetable farmers to shift to organic agriculture than other groups, she said.

"There are already local vegetables in the region being sold as organically produced but they are not certified by the OCCP," Sim said.

"If only the BSU would be allowed to certify, it would mean a lot for local vegetable farmers," she said.

Sim said the university would open an organic market in front of its College of Agriculture building every Friday afternoon to encourage vegetable farmers to sell their organic products.

Tesda Quezon chief survives ambush; gunman killed

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—A TOP GOVERNMENT official survived an ambush by two armed men on a motorcycle on the outskirts of the city yesterday. His driver, although wounded, managed to fire back and kill one of the attackers.

Ramon Geron, provincial director of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), told local journalists that he was not the actual target but his driver, identified as Caloy Isaac.

Geron said Isaac, 44, had been receiving death threat messages through his mobile phone.

"We're still investigating all possible angles," said Senior Supt. Reuben Theodore, city police chief.

He identified the dead gunman as Melanio Aquitania, a convicted felon out on parole and native of nearby Tayabas town.

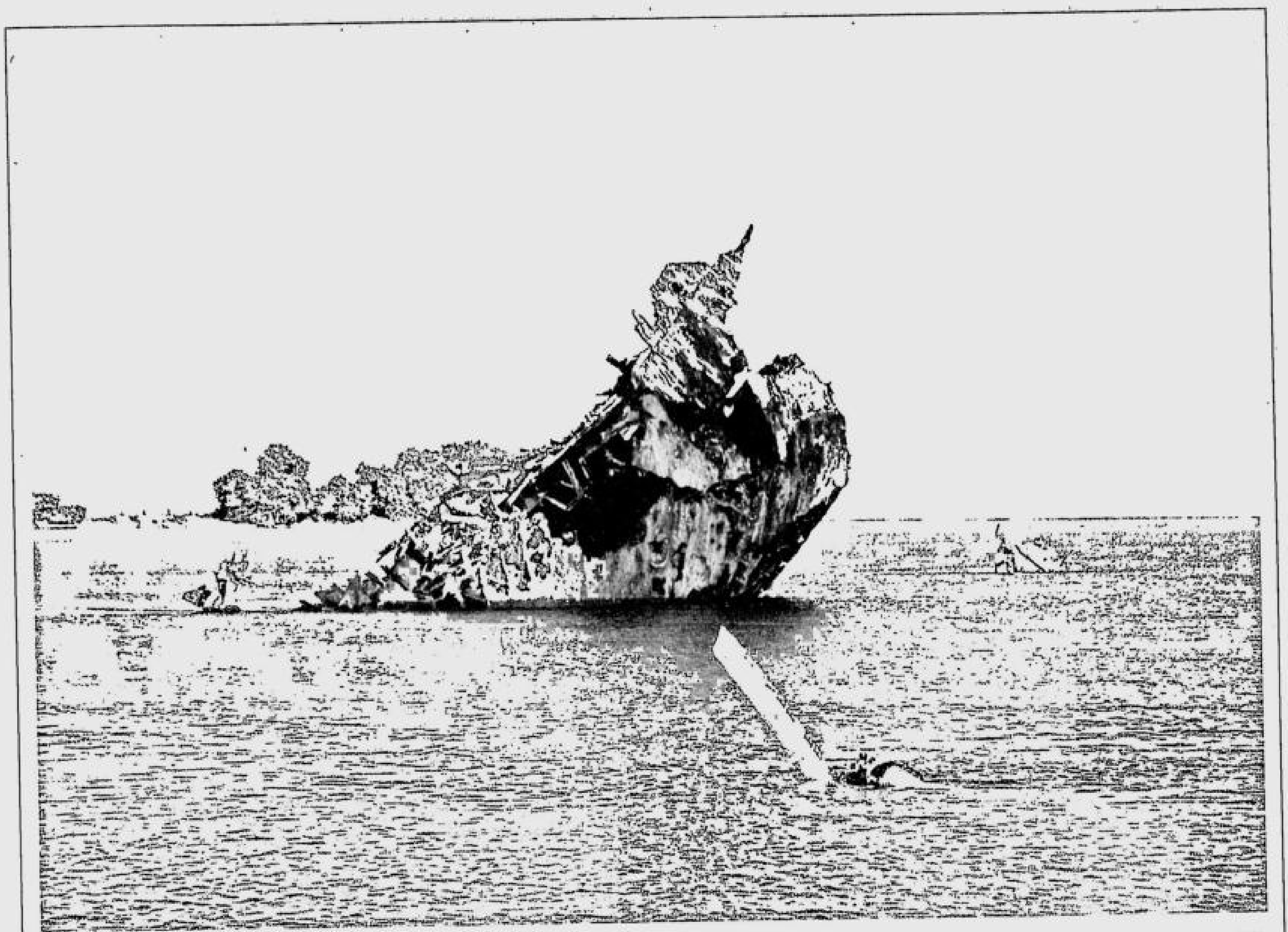
Police said Geron was on his way to the city proper on board an Isuzu Hi-Lander AUV (Asian ulitity vehicle) when the gunmen, riding on a black Honda motorcycle, appeared on the left side of the vehicle in Barangay Ibabang Dupay at around 8 a.m.

They peppered the vehicle with bullets fired with a .45 cal. pistol, hitting Isaac several times in the left arm and back but sparing the Tesda official.

Although wounded, Isaac was able to grab his .45 cal. pistol from the vehicle's compartment, escape through the right door, and fire back. One of the attackers was shot in different parts of the body and died on the spot, while his companion managed to escape.

"I'm sure I also hit the other one. I fired one full magazine," said Isaac while waiting to be operated on at the nearby MMG Hospital. The driver is one of the best shooters of a local gun club, the K-609.

Isaac admitted that he had been receiving death threats. "They said they would get me, but I didn't pay attention. I just took precautions," he said.



YVETTE LEE/CONTRIBUTOR

SEA SCENE
A diver surfaces near a wreck off an islet in the Tubbataha National Marine Park after enjoying colorful corals and schools of fish beneath its waters. Increased user fees have enabled park rangers to continue seaborne patrols to protect the park despite high fuel costs.

Gov faces suit for plunder in marble quarry

By Norman Bordadora

THE OWNER OF THE CONTROVERSIAL marble quarry inside the historic Biak-na-Bato site in Bulacan as early as February accused Bulacan Gov. Josephine dela Cruz of conniving with illegal miners through the years in taking valuable tea rose marble from her corporation's property.

Dr. Lourdes Pascual, a 77-year-old retired anesthesiologist, told the INQUIRER in an interview that Dela Cruz through the years had been giving small-scale mining permits to illegal miners who in turn allegedly quarry marble from Roosemoore Mining and Development Corp.'s 300-hectare property instead of the sites mentioned in their permits.

But Dela Cruz, through Bulacan provincial administrator Ma. Gladys Cruz-Sta. Rita, said there was nothing irregular in the issuance of mining permits by the provincial government.

Sta. Rita said the authority was provided for by the Local Government Code and the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

"The authority to issue permits and license to small-scale miners is a devolved function to the local government units. However, the issuance of the permit is scrutinized and deliberated on by the members of the provincial mining and regulatory board," Sta. Rita said.

"The law authorizes the governor to follow this mandate," she said.

Sta. Rita said the governor refuses to answer the other issues raised against her by Pascual.

Pascual filed plunder and economic sabotage charges against Dela Cruz and several alleged illegal miners at the Office of the Ombudsman on Feb. 7, 2006.

One of the alleged illegal miners include a certain Constantino Pascual, who Pascual alleged to have falsified a deed of assignment allowing him to operate in RMDC's marble quarry.

"(Dela Cruz's) the one behind the operations of the small-scale miners who have been taking marble from inside the Roosemoore property," Pascual said, in the wake of Dela Cruz's recent pronouncements against a Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office order lifting the ban against mining in the Biak-na-Bato National Park.

Pascual, RMDC president and one of the firm's two surviving incorporators, said Roosemoore's more than 330-hectare property where tea rose marble could be quarried had already been separated by the Batasang Pambansa from the historical heritage site following representations with the then dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1982.

A cubic meter of tea rose marble—a pinking type of stone popular in the international high-end market—is said to cost at least $450.

Pacquiao relatives to sue hospital

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—WORLD Boxing Council Super Featherweight International Champion Manny Pacquiao said his family was planning to file a case against a private hospital here for demanding a P50,000 downpayment before attending to one of his relatives who was brought there for treatment.

A visibly irked Pacquiao told reporters over the weekend that Armando Jamora, 22, a cousin of his wife Jinky, died several hours after he was left unattended at the General Santos City Doctor's Hospital (GSCDH).

The Filipino boxing hero claimed that Jamora was rushed to the GSCDH after suffering from high fever.

Pacquiao said the hospital demanded a P50,000 downpayment before treating the patient.

"*Nakiusap yong* father-in-law *ko na kung pwede* P30,000 *lang muna ang bayaran kasi wala pa silang ganun kalaking* cash. *Pero ayaw ng* hospital management *kasi kailangan* P50,000 *raw talaga* (My father-in-law pleaded to the hospital to pay P30,000 at first because they didn't have that much cash. But the hospital management refused, demanding the entire P50,000)," Pacquiao added.

This prompted Nestor Jamora to introduce himself as Pacquiao's father-in-law, but nobody believed him.

The younger Jamora was attended to only after a hospital staff member vouched for what Nestor claimed to be.

But it was already too late.

"*Nakakaawa pala ang mga mahihirap na pasyente diyan kung ganon. Mamamatay lang na di inaasikaso. Mas mahalaga pa ba ang pera kesa sa buhay ng tao?* (The poor are pitiful. They'll just die without treatment. Is money more important than life?)" Pacquiao asked.

The INQUIRER tried to get the side of the hospital but a certain Ivy Villanueva of the administration department said Sis. Marcelita Sarnillo, the hospital administrator, was not available.

Villanueva said only Sarnillo is allowed to give statements to the media.

This was not the first controversy involving GSCDH.

Last month, members of Bigkis Balaod, a nongovernment organization, staged a protest rally in front of the hospital for refusing to release a patient who failed to settle his hospital bills.

The parents of the patient signed a promissory note to pay the bill on installment basis but this was ignored by the hospital management.

The hospital, however, released the patient after lawyer Emmanuel Fontanilla, one of the founders of Bigkis Balaod, threatened to file charges of serious illegal detention and damages against the hospital. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

3 guerrillas, Army officer slain in clashes in Isabela town forest

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, GAMU, ISAbela—Three communist rebels and an Army officer were killed in a gun battle on Sunday in a thickly forested area in Barangay Sindon Bayabo in Ilagan, Isabela, military officials said.

In Camp Olivas, Pampanga, elite police troops reported the capture of three New People's Army (NPA) rebels allegedly deployed in Central Luzon to help in the expansion plan of the communist army in the region.

Col. Hilario Atendido, 502nd Infantry Brigade commander, identified the soldier slain in Ilagan as S/Sgt. Gabriel Guanzon and one of the rebel fatalities as Romeo Turqueza, alias Ka Omeng.

The bodies of two of the rebels and the soldier were recovered late Sunday, while that of the third rebel was found early Monday, he told the INQUIRER. They were brought to Funeraria Carbonel in Ilagan on Monday.

"There were scores of other rebels killed and wounded but their bodies have yet to be recovered," Atendido said.

Maj. Victor Tanggawohn, civil-military operations unit commander of the 5th Infantry Division, said a platoon of Army soldiers from Alpha Company of the 45th Infantry Battalion chanced upon 20 NPA rebels at Sitio Bumorbor in Sindon Bayabo, about 90 km from the town proper. The rebels were believed to belong to the northern front of the NPA Cagayan Valley Regional Party Committee.

Tanggawohn reported another encounter between soldiers and 10 rebels on July 9 in Balbalan, Kalinga. The rebels withdrew after a five-minute firefight, bringing with them their wounded comrades, he said.

3 rebels held

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Central Luzon police director, identified the captured rebels as Ramil Tranquena and Alberto Dazo, both of Quezon, and Johnny Guela of Camarines Sur.

Senior Supt. Keith Singian, regional head of the Philippine National Police's Regional Mobile Group, said the three were cornered in a house in Barangay Sto. Cristo in Candaba town in Pampanga at past 11 p.m. on July 8. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

School execs seek Flavier help in exam leak probe

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE CITY'S nursing schools on Tuesday asked Sen. Juan Flavier to look into the alleged cheating in the June 11 and 12 nursing board examinations here.

School deans handed Flavier documents that included supposed pieces of evidence that a local nursing review school circulated handwritten test questions and answers. The senator opened the city's new health services building here last week.

At least 91 nursing graduates asked the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to delay the release of test results pending the investigation.

Lawyer Cheryl Daytec-Yangot, the complainants' counsel, said the involvement of R.A. Gapuz Nursing Review Center in the test leakages suggested that cheating could have also occurred in other PRC test centers where the review center had local operations.

Officials of the review center denied that the center released test questionnaires and answers. They said the examinees could be referring to copies of old test questions that their clients use for practice on the eve of each board exam schedule.

A nursing school dean said there was pressure from the Philippine Nurses Association to end the scandal because it might affect a plan to establish American licensing centers in the country for migrating Filipino nurses.

Flavier, a former health secretary, reserved his comments about the controversy.

"I just received the copies. I still have to study them [before I can seek] a Senate investigation," he said.

Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan, who was also approached by local nursing schools, said pursuing a congressional investigation at this stage would be "unfair" to the PRC. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Erap to sue beauty queen

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA wants out—on Friday.

The ousted president yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to allow him to go to Manila to file libel charges before the Manila City Prosecutor's Office against former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez, her mother Blanquita and the publisher, editor and a reporter of a Manila-based newspaper.

Estrada also asked the antigraft court to allow him to undergo medical checkup at the San Juan Medical Center after the filing of the suit on Friday.

In an urgent motion filed by lawyer Rene Saguisag, Estrada asked the court to allow him to leave his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, where he is detained on plunder charges, to file a libel complaint against Pelaez, publisher Teodoro Locsin Jr., editor in chief Jojo Robles and reporter Christine Herrera, all of the Manila Standard Today newspaper.

Saguisag said the paper published news reports repeatedly linking Estrada to money laundering. *(See related story on Page A5)*

Saguisag said Estrada elected to fight back with a libel suit "to vindicate his family name."

Pelaez, a 29-year-old American citizen of Filipino descent who was second runner-up for the 1999 Miss Philippines title, filed a complaint Thursday against Estrada and seven others for allegedly defrauding her of her mother's property on a false promise that she would be given a beer dealership.

Pelaez filed the complaint at the Makati City Prosecutor's Office against Estrada and top executives of food and beer giant San Miguel Corp. and United Coconut Planters Bank.

Former immigration commissioner Rufus Rodriguez, a member of Estrada's legal defense team, said the libel charges required the complainant to appear personally before the prosecutor to swear to the truth of the allegations he was filing.

Rodriguez said Estrada became even more determined to file the charges because the ousted leader had come to believe that powerful individuals were using Joelle and Blanquita to destroy his credibility and poison the minds of Sandiganbayan justices hearing his plunder case.

Rodriguez said the timing of Joelle's arrival in the country and her filing of the fraud case were questionable, claiming they happened on the heels of the government prosecutors' failure to break Estrada's testimony before the antigraft court.

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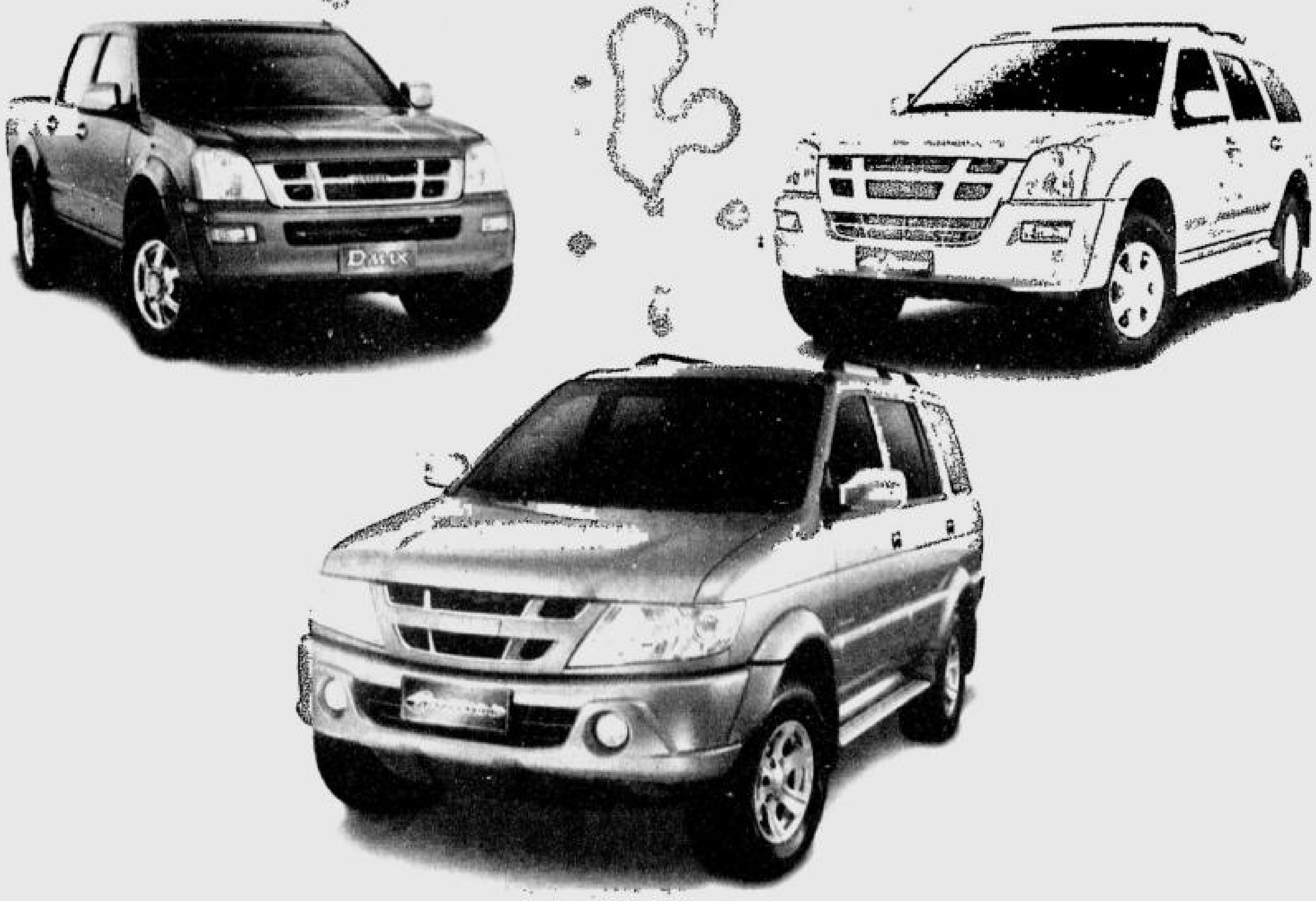

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PROUD MOM
Lea Salonga carries 2-month-old daughter Nicole Beverly out of the St. James Church in Ayala Alabang after the baby's christening Sunday. Among the godparents were Speaker Jose de Venecia and wife Gina. The complete story and more pictures will come out on Friday in Stars Living. RYAN LIM

STORMY JULY

Ester out, Florita in

By Blanche S. Rivera

TWO DAYS AFTER TYPHOON "ESTER" LEFT the country, another tropical cyclone has entered the Philippine area of responsibility, threatening Central Luzon.

With maximum sustained winds of 75 kph, tropical storm "Florita" accelerated over the Pacific Ocean yesterday and was spotted based on satellite images at 1,140 km east of Central Luzon.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has not yet raised storm signals anywhere in the country but said Florita would strengthen the southwest monsoon that causes rains.

"This disturbance will continue to enhance the southwest monsoon which may bring moderate to heavy rains over Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao," Pagasa said in its severe weather bulletin yesterday.

The weather bureau also raised gale warnings, saying the strong winds would affect the western and northern seaboards of Luzon and the western seaboards of Visayas.

"Fishing boats and other small sea crafts are advised not to venture out into the sea while bigger sea crafts are alerted against moderate to high waves," Pagasa said.

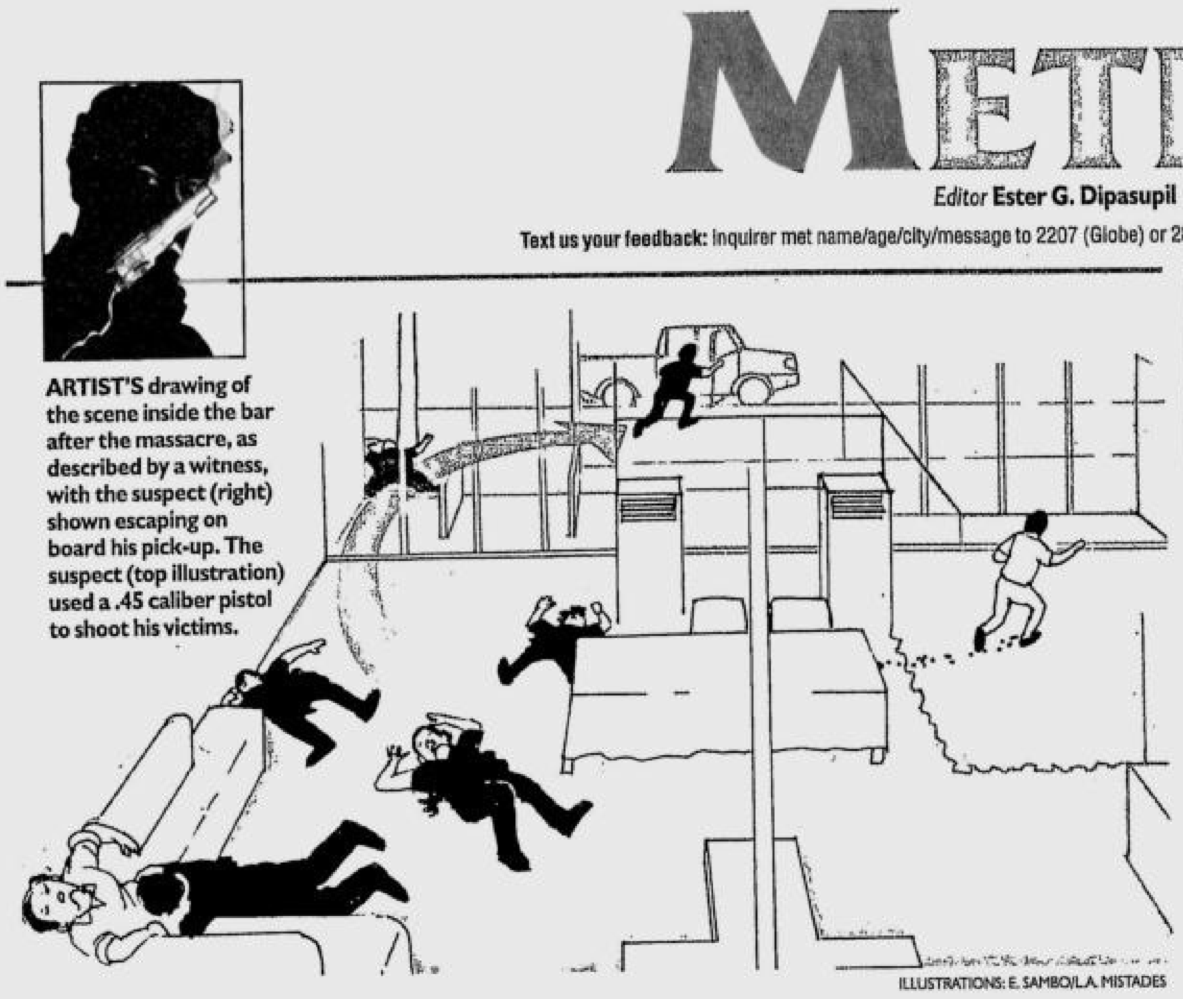
Winds of up to 45 to 65 kph (25 to 35 knots) are expected in the northern seaboard of Luzon, with sea conditions being rough to very rough due to big waves that could reach up to five meters in height.

Occasional rains would also affect Visayas, with winds of up to 60 kph and waves of 3.7 meters.

Florita is expected to be in the vicinity of Aparri, Cagayan today and Wednesday morning. The storm would be on its way out by Thursday when it will be 310 km north northeast of Basco, Batanes.

The weather bureau is expecting three to four tropical cyclones this month, the peak of the wet season in the Philippines.

METRO
Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**
Text us your feedback: Inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph



ARTIST'S drawing of the scene inside the bar after the massacre, as described by a witness, with the suspect (right) shown escaping on board his pick-up. The suspect (top illustration) used a .45 caliber pistol to shoot his victims.

ILLUSTRATIONS: E. SAMBO/L.A. MISTADES

6 men killed, 2 wounded in bar shooting spree

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY GOT INTO A CONFRONTATION five days ago but they were able to square everything out. Or so 42-year-old Mario Pastorpili thought.

On Sunday night, Henry Fong, 27, showed up in a bar where Pastorpili and other family drivers were drinking. Using a .45-caliber handgun, Fong shot Pastorpili twice before firing at the victim's companions.

When he ran out of bullets, Fong coolly reloaded another clip into his gun and then resumed firing at the other people inside the bar.

Fong then left the bar but went back inside when he heard one of the victims, later identified as Felix Alday, moaning. He shot Alday in the chest, one of those who witnessed the shooting spree told the police.

Scene of the Crime Operatives who inspected the bar later found 16 empty shells.

Pastorpili, the president of the Mix Drivers Brotherhood Inc., an association of private family drivers, died of two gunshot wounds at the St. Luke's Hospital. Three other members of the group died on the spot—Vladimir Baona, 35; Christopher Caedo, 35; and Alday, who died of two gunshot wounds to the chest.

Four more members were rushed to the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital but Crispin Tambolian, 33, and Ronald

SIX MEN/ A18

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Lots and lots of pizza bring much success to Ed and Tess Ngan Tian. A lot of help was given to them by BPI Family Savings Bank.

Twenty years ago, Tess Ngan Tian and her husband Ed stood on a vacant lot in Mendiola, Manila. The couple did not have the slightest idea that it was the start of something big for them. That vacant lot actually became the birthplace of a successful family business.

The couple constructed a commercial building on that lot and rented out stalls to businessmen. Tess decided to turn the vacant stalls to a small snack bar that sold siopao, sandwiches and other quick-serve merienda to students. *"It was when I decided to concentrate on one product – pizza! I knew it was a big step to take. But my husband convinced me to take the risk"*, said Tess. And so, she started her venture into the pizza business by enrolling in a pizza technology course at the American Institute of Baking in the US.

"Armed with the knowledge to help me formulate a pizza that would satisfy the Filipino palate, I started my pizza business and named it Lots 'A Pizza". Tess recalled. In 1996, the first Lots 'A Pizza store was opened in Virra Mall. With a lot of perseverance and hard work, Tess was able to grow the business. Now, it has a total of more than 75 stores all over Luzon.

"Our business would not have grown without the support of our partners, and of BPI Family Savings Bank". said Tess. BPI Family Savings Bank granted them a loan, which they used in their business and helped in the construction of the 3-storey Lots 'A Pizza headquarters in Las Piñas.

"We will continue to expand in Visayas and Mindanao, and we will once more ask the support of BPI Family Savings Bank", an obviously happy and proud Tess Ngan Tian said while she helped in serving the customers in their store.

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Fire leaves 2,000 families homeless

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A 21-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WAS KILLED while 2,000 families lost their homes in a fire that razed more than 600 houses in a slum area in Malabon yesterday morning.

The fire, which was reportedly caused by an unattended candle, broke out at around 4:30 a.m. in the Gozun compound in Tonsuya, Letre—a 10-hectare lot reportedly owned by Francisco Gozun.

It started inside the room of Erwin Rolao, one of the boarders staying in the house owned by Azucena Francisco.

Insp. Rodrigo Reyes, Malabon City fire chief, identified the lone fatality as Analyn Tanejo.

Six people hurt

Six other people were injured, among them a woman who fell down a flight of stairs and a man who stepped on a piece of burnt roof.

A report from Reuters said that narrow alleys in the area prevented firefighters from getting close to the house where the fire started.

The flames spread quickly because most of the houses were made of light materials, the report added.

Some residents even tried to take the hoses of firemen in an effort to save their houses, according to radio station dzBB.

P1-M assistance for victims

The incident prompted Mayor Canuto Oreta to order the release of P1 million which would be used to buy rice, canned goods and blankets for distribution to the victims.

Volunteers from the Philippine National Red Cross and several nongovernment organizations went to the area in the afternoon to help the families who lost their homes.

"It is a disaster," Oreta said. "Our problem now is setting up temporary shelters for the families because there are classes in schools normally used as evacuation centers during calamities.

The mayor, meanwhile, ordered officials of the Bureau of Fire Department to determine the cause of the fire. *With Associated Press, Reuters reports*

A MAN looks at what remains of his house.

REUTERS

3 car theft suspects arrested

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TWO ALLEGED CAR THIEVES WERE arrested on Sunday afternoon by operatives of the Manila Police District (MPD) in San Miguel, Manila.

Suspects Alfredo Prado, 42, and Charlie Panda, 34, both of San Juan, were nabbed by law enforcers who were manning a checkpoint on Palanca Street.

A third suspect, Macmod Liwalug, 34, of Quiapo, Manila, was arrested in a follow-up operation shortly after his alleged accomplices implicated him in their car theft activities.

Suspicious conduction sticker

Based on the report submitted by Supt. Teodorico Perez, Sta. Mesa station commander, to MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, his men flagged down the Lite Ace van (TBP 581) driven by Prado at around 4:30 p.m. Sunday after noticing that the vehicle's conduction sticker was partly erased.

When the suspect failed to show the vehicle's registration papers, the police searched the van and found two identification cards bearing the name of a certain Joseph Alexis B. Bando on the floor.

When the police contacted Bando, he told them that he was the owner of the vehicle which was stolen while parked in front of his house last July 6.

Cohort arrested

Police then noticed a Toyota Corona (TAV 914) behind the Lite Ace van and approached the driver for the vehicle's documents.

"The MPD operatives immediately discovered that the driver of the second vehicle was Prado's companion. The two suspects later identified Liwalug as their contact at the Islamic Center," Bulaong said.

The MPD Sta. Mesa policemen, with members of the Special Weapons and Tactics unit, apprehended suspect Liwalug in a follow-up operation.

The three suspects are now detained at the MPD headquarters, Bulaong said.

THE 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL: "I was powerless."

ROMY HOMILLADA

Alleged rape victim seeks VACC's help

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO WAS ALlegedly raped by four men in Hermosa, Bataan has asked an anticrime group to help her get justice.

"I want all of you to know that what I am going through is not easy. I was powerless. I tried to fight back but I could not do anything," said the victim, who was in tears as she faced the media yesterday, at the office of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption in Makati.

The girl, who was accompanied by her mother, accused officials in Bataan of not acting on the case which she filed against four men who raped her on May 21.

"A police officer even suggested that [my daughter] should just marry [one of the suspects]," said the victim's mother

VACC founding chair Dante Jimenez promised to help the complainant. He said the young girl's case was the 18th rape complaint that his organization has received for this month. He was quick to attribute the rise in rape cases to last month's abolition of the death penalty law, which his group believes was the best deterrent against heinous crimes.

"The proponents of the death penalty law have been arguing that the only way to have an effective punishment is the certainty of arrest and prosecution. In this case, where is the certainty that the proponents have been mouthing?" Jimenez said.

Bomb drill set tomorrow in Taguig

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A BOMB DRILL WOULD BE HELD ON Wednesday at the Global City in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City to prepare expatriates living in the area for possible terror attacks, police said yesterday.

"We will check their preparedness for bomb attacks," Southern Police District chief Wilfredo Garcia told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Garcia said they have already coordinated with the city government about the conduct of the drill.

The Global City, a booming business and deluxe residential district, is considered one of several vital installations in Metro Manila, he added.

Tomorrow's drill is part of several being organized by the National Capital Region Police Office to gauge the preparedness of business establishments in dealing with possible bombing attacks.

Last month, the police conducted bomb simulation exercises at the Shangri-La mall in Mandaluyong City and at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay has refused to allow the NCRPO to conduct a drill in the country's financial district, saying it might cause "undue panic" among residents.

6 men killed, 2 wounded in bar shooting spree

From page A17

Macalad died while undergoing treatment.

The other two victims—Bryan Fermin, 26 and Renato Vargas, 40—were in critical condition as of yesterday.

San Juan Police chief Rodelio Jocson said Pastorpili and the other victims were drinking on Sunday night inside the Cheers and Beers KTV Bar on Araneta Extension in Barangay Progreso.

The group had just ended their regular meeting at the bar which began at 3 p.m. with more than 40 members present.

PO1 Alexander De Dumo told the INQUIRER that most of the members had already left but Pastorpili and 15 other drivers stayed behind and began drinking. The merrymaking went on until Fong walked in at around 6 p.m., a gun tucked in the waistband of his pants.

Fong, also known as Henry Cuales according to De Dumo, approached the drivers who were seated on a long table near the entrance. He was looking for Pastorpili.

Pastorpili then stood up, introduced himself and asked why Fong was looking for him.

"You are a policeman, right? You showed me a fake identification card, remember?" Fong replied, speaking in Filipino, according to one of the drivers who survived the killing spree.

Another driver told the police that yesterday was not the first time Fong and Pastorpili had met, He said that the two had figured in an argument on July 4 in the bar, where their group usually holds meetings.

According to the driver, the two started arguing after Fong kicked Pastorpili while he was talking to a woman outside the bar. The kick, whether delivered unintentionally or not, said the witness, caused Pastorpili to fall to the ground.

The incident led to an argument between the two men which ended when Fong, who denied kicking Pastorpili, apologized.

The police said Fong, who allegedly has a pending case for robbery in a Marikina court, fled after the incident on board a white Mazda pick-up.

All's not well in GMA Cabinet

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE SON-IN-LAW OF A BIG-TIME POLITIcian in Northern Luzon is riding on his wife's influence by dipping his fingers in every business pie in his wife's home province.

This guy, an American citizen, is derisively referred to by many constituents as "ang bagong hari" (the new king) in the Northern Luzon province.

At the province's busy port, he dictates which businessman gets what kind of business. Pity the people who are not his cronies or who don't come across.

Even the mining claims in the province should have his approval. He decides which persons are awarded mining claims and which should be turned down.

Many people are surprised why this guy's brother-in-law, a congressman, has not put a stop to his shenanigans. They think that the congressman is not doing anything in deference to his father who favors his daughter.

There's a squabble within the family of this big-time politician with the congressman siding with his mother and the daughter siding with the father who is openly cohabiting with a much younger woman.

Now, the big-time politician wants his daughter to run for Congress in next year's election against the congressman's wife. The congressman, whose third term ends next year, is planning to field his wife.

Most constituents prefer the congressman's wife to his sister because they dislike her husband who is not from the Northern Luzon province but from Mindanao.

* * *

All is not well in the Macapagal-Arroyo cabinet and the crack is showing.

Secretary Silvestre Afable, the government chief negotiator in the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), is having a tiff with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Afable resigned as cabinet officer for regional development in the Cordillera, in protest over the suspension by Ermita of Baguio City Mayor Braulio Yaranon.

The Palace suspended Yaranon after he obstructed the operations of Jadewell Pay Parking Corp., a private entity that collects parking and toll fees in Baguio.

The mayor insists the city government has the sole power of taxation and police power over motorists.

Afable, an Igorot who's one-fourth Japanese, fully supports Yaranon on his stand. Afable is one of the brightest and most hardworking members of Arroyo's cabinet. He would be a big loss if he resigns from the cabinet.

* * *

You want to know why more and more people sympathize with the New People's Army?

Regie Dealagnon, 27, cargo truck driver, passed through a police checkpoint in Agoncillo, Batangas recently. He didn't understand what the policeman manning the checkpoint, SPO2 Quintin Vergara, wanted from him.

So Dealagnon asked what the cop wanted. Vergara slapped him on the face twice.

METROBRIEFS

Killed over a P5 coin

NORBERTO Suarez Jr. just wanted to sing a song after a hard day's work so when he saw a P5 coin on a table beside a videoke machine, he did what only seemed natural. He dropped the coin into the slot, picked a tune and the sang his heart out. It was the last videoke song the 26-year-old welder would ever sing. A man, who was the likely owner of the coin, sneaked up to him and stabbed him dead on Sunday afternoon in Quezon City before fleeing. Investigation showed that Suarez, a resident of Gulod, Novaliches, was on his way home at about 5 p.m. with coworkers Jun Echaluse and Danilo Esguerra, when he chanced upon the P5 coin. The victim picked the coin up and sang a song he had chosen from a list, according to a report by case investigator Rodolfo Zulueta. Out of nowhere, a man, later identified as one Noel Layson, went up to him and stabbed him in the stomach, Zulueta said. The victim was rushed to the Quezon City General Hospital but he was pronounced dead on arrival.

DJ Yap

Man shot dead in QC

AN OLD grudge led to the death of a construction worker and the wounding of two of his friends at midnight yesterday in Quezon City. Jessie Boy Agustin, 20, of 27 Sitio Pajo, Barangay Baesa, was killed while his friends Alvin Loon, 16, and Arnel Abad, 19, were injured. The three were hanging out at a store on Mendez Street when two men, identified only by their aliases "Dennis" and "Dongdong," saw them, according to a report by case investigator SPO1 Felipe Tumibay. Without provocation, the suspects suddenly approached the three and began firing at them with shotguns of an unknown type and caliber, Tumibay said. Investigators said Dennis and Dongdong had long been nursing a grudge against the victims. It was not clear, however, what the cause of the quarrel was.

DJ Yap

Alun-Alon exhibit

THE MAKATI Artists Guild's Alun-Alon Exhibit runs until today at the Art Center, Building A SM Megamall. On display are the works of Rubee Alcantara, Fanny Blanco, Mel Cabriana, Thom Daquioag, Allison David, Deborah Delpan, Lita Gelano, Teresita Mapua, Obi Mapua, Helen Mirasol, Fitz Ocampo Narvacan, Peter Sutcliffe, Michelle Tan, Stella Torres, Manuel Torres, Aina Valencia and Molly Yap.

DID YOU KNOW

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN THE FIRST quarter of 2006, an incident of cell phone snatching was reported in Metro Manila daily?

The National Capital Region saw a 92 percent jump in cases of cell phone theft from January to March this year, from 140 cases to 73 cases during the same period in 2005.

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

Summer of discontent in Mexico

Defeated leftist candidate plans legal challenge in election standoff

MEXICO CITY—MEXICO WAS bracing for a summer of discontent as supporters of defeated presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador vowed Sunday to challenge last week's presidential vote right through to the formal certification of results in September.

Lopez Obrador said his campaign planned to file a legal challenge Sunday with the Federal Electoral Tribunal and that officials with his Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) were also to take the case to Mexico's Supreme Court, which can issue recommendations to the tribunal, the final arbiter of electoral disputes.

On Saturday, a massive crowd, estimated at 280,000 by authorities and 400,000 by organizers protested the conservative victory in the country's presidential election in Mexico City's huge downtown Zocalo square and neighboring streets.

"We are certain we triumphed on July 2," Lopez Obrador told the crowd, claiming widespread irregularities marked the electoral process that gave victory by a razor-thin margin to conservative Felipe Calderon, of the governing National Action Party (PAN).

Saturday's display could just be a foretaste of things to come: Lopez Obrador has called for nationwide protests, with the first to be held Wednesday in the Mexican capital.

"There is clear evidence that they took away our votes to favor the right," said the leftist former Mexico City mayor on Saturday, who advocates the cause of the millions of impoverished Mexicans.

Lopez Obrador alleged that President Vicente Fox illegally campaigned in favor of Calderon, that the PAN had far exceeded campaign spending limits and that the governing party bought votes.

The electoral tribunal has until Sept. 6 to render its final verdict on the outcome of the July 2 election.

Calderon, 43, who won with an advantage of just over 244,000 votes, or 0.6 percentage points, dismissed claims of fraud during the electoral process, which a number of international observers called free and fair.

He said that now was the time for Mexicans to put the campaign disputes behind them and work to create a politically stable country attractive to foreign investors. *AFP*

Airbus crash investigated as Russia mourns

IRKUTSK, RUSSIA—INVESTIGATORS worked Monday to determine what caused an Airbus plane to overrun the runway and crash in the Siberian city of Irkutsk, as Russia marked a day of mourning for some 130 people killed in the accident.

Transport Minister Igor Levitin chaired a meeting of a commission set up to investigate the cause of the accident and told reporters here afterward that so far 122 bodies had been recovered and six were still unaccounted for while 57 people were being treated in hospital for injuries.

The crash of the Airbus A310 occurred Sunday when the plane on a flight from Moscow landed at the Irkutsk airport but failed to slow down sufficiently and careered off the end of the runway, ramming into a building and bursting into flames.

The plane's flight data and voice recorders were sent to Moscow for analysis and investigating officials were quoted in Russian media as saying that a problem with the braking system or human error were among potential causes of the wreck they would be looking at.

An unnamed airline source quoted by Itar-Tass news agency however said any theories on what caused the plane to crash that were leaked before the flight recorders had been thoroughly analyzed were premature.

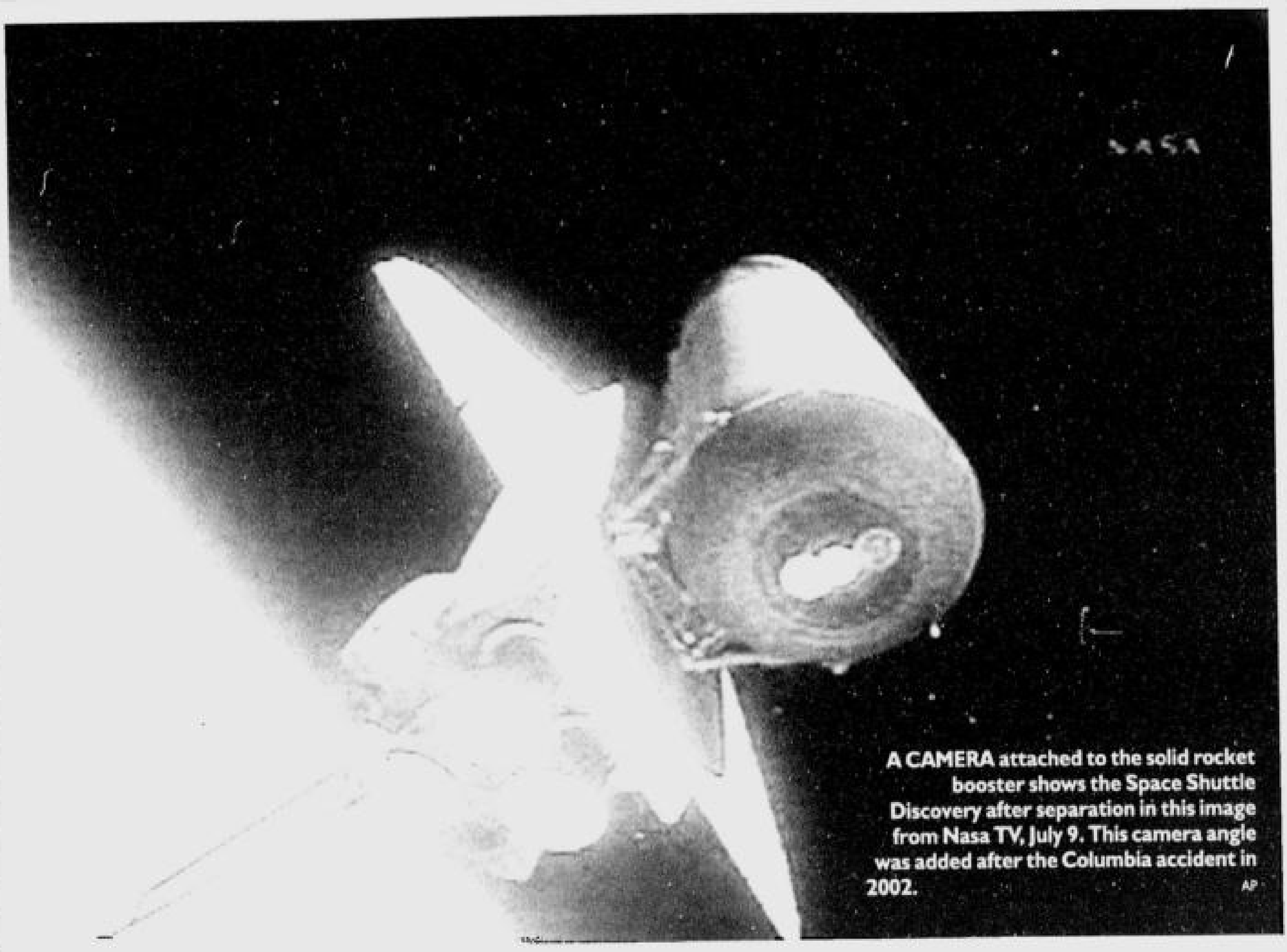
The source said the plane was piloted by two veterans who had logged many hours in the air and had no record of mishaps.

Obtaining a precise figure for dead and injured was complicated by the fact that various officials gave varying numbers for how many people were onboard the plane and some passengers that survived appeared to have left the scene of the accident altogether.

Most accounts however put the number of bodies recovered so far at 122 and the numbers of victims still unaccounted for was between six and nine, putting the current death toll from the accident at between 128 and 131.

President Vladimir Putin declared Monday a national day of mourning and flags throughout Russia were ordered flown at half staff while public entertainment events were cancelled, media reports said.

The company that operated the flight, S7 Airlines—until recently known as Sibir—promised to fly families of those aboard the ill-fated flight from Moscow to Irkutsk to identify remains or comfort survivors, but those flights were delayed due to weather conditions in Irkutsk, media said. *AFP*



A CAMERA attached to the solid rocket booster shows the Space Shuttle Discovery after separation in this image from Nasa TV, July 9. This camera angle was added after the Columbia accident in 2002. AP

Space shuttle gets clean bill of health

HOUSTON—SPACE SHUTTLE Discovery got a clean bill of health from Nasa manager's on Sunday, as they declared it "absolutely clear" to make a scorching return to Earth with no concerns about damage to the spacecraft's heat shield.

Coupled with favorable reports on the shuttle's external fuel tank during launch last week, Nasa is now confident the shuttle program can safely resume construction of the International Space Station as early as next month.

Assembly has been on hold since the 2003 Columbia disaster.

"Everything seems to be back on track," said Germany's Thomas Reiter, who hitched a ride on Discovery to join the space station crew as a third member to remain on board.

Teams of experts worked overnight to resolve lingering concerns about a piece of material protruding from between heat-resistant tiles on Discovery's belly. They also focused on two bits of torn insulation blankets.

"Not only did the team pound these issues flat, they put a dimple in the board when all was said and done," said Steve Poulos, orbiter project manager at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. "We are absolutely clear and ready to bring this vehicle home whenever the mission is accomplished," he said.

Discovery is scheduled to return to Earth July 17.

The shuttle crew spent their sixth day in space unpacking some of the 2 tons of cargo they brought along for the space station. Ground controllers kept news of the World Cup soccer championship flowing to Reiter and British-born astronaut Piers Sellers, both of whom had favored France to win.

The astronauts' comments on competitors France and Italy were replayed in part on a big screen at the stadium in Berlin where the World Cup final was played.

"You guys are rock stars," said astronaut Lee Archambault from Mission Control in Houston.

Sellers and US colleague Michael Fossum were preparing for the second of three spacewalks planned for the shuttle's 13-day mission, slated to begin at 8:13 a.m. EDT on Monday. It is devoted to repairing the station's mobile rail cart, which totes heavy components into position for installation.

Good news about Discovery has given Nasa confidence its $1.3-billion safety upgrade of the shuttles following the Columbia fiasco is a success, and Nasa can complete assembly of the station before the three-ship fleet is retired in 2010. *Reuters*

RICE REUTERS

'Condistas' want Rice to be 2008 president

COLUMBUS, OHIO—THE NAMES are varied—Team Condi, Rice for America, Condistas—yet the goal is the same: Elect Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice president in 2008.

A disparate group of Internet gurus, political junkies and foes of Democratic Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton is pushing a Rice candidacy even though President George W. Bush's top diplomat has said repeatedly that she has no desire to be president.

But the Republican also has declined invitations to rule out a bid in 2008, spoken about the likelihood of a minority winning the White House in her lifetime and taken steps to soften her image—words and deeds that have provided a glimmer of hope to her fans.

Mick Wright, a professional webmaster in Memphis, Tennessee, is one of more than a dozen people who registered draft-Rice websites in the year after Bush was reelected.

"Once that was all over, you started thinking, what's going to happen in the next election?" said Wright, a co-founder of www.condipundit.com. "The first one to come to mind as a viable candidate was Condoleezza Rice."

Similar websites have cropped up in widely diverse cities, including Seattle; West Sand Lake, New York; Magna, Utah; and Cedarville, Ohio. They are promoting Rice's credentials, soliciting donations and marketing T-shirts, bobblehead dolls and "I Like Rice" buttons.

The Miami-based Americans for Dr. Rice political action committee has established chapters in critical states, including Ohio and Florida. A second PAC, Rice for America, emerged in Greensboro, North Carolina, last July—though neither has yet reported any income or spending to the Federal Election Commission. *AP*

Howard charged with lying about promise to step down

AUSTRALIAN PM Howard AP

SYDNEY—A SIMMERING ROW over the leadership of Australia erupted into an astonishing public confrontation between the prime minister and the treasurer Monday over an alleged promise to hand over power.

Just hours after Prime Minister John Howard denied making such a promise, Treasurer Peter Costello called a news conference to say that he had.

"There was no deal made," Howard said, denying a reported account of a meeting with Costello in December 1994 as the two men haggled over the leadership of the Liberal Party.

Costello said, however, that Howard had asked him at the meeting not to stand for the Liberal Party leadership.

"He told me that he intended to do one-and-a-half terms as prime minister and then would hand over. I did not seek that undertaking, he volunteered and I took him at his word," Costello said.

"Obviously that did not happen."

The disputed meeting was first revealed at the weekend when former Liberal minister Ian McLachlan, who was present, said he had kept notes which showed that Howard told Costello he would step down after two terms.

Howard, who then won the party leadership without a challenge from Costello, went on to lead the Liberals to victory in 1996—and in three subsequent elections.

Howard, 66, has long been expected to step down and hand over to Costello, 48, the deputy party leader, but has refused to be drawn on whether he would lead the Liberals into the next election, due in 2007.

Costello, who has presided over the treasury in boom times for Australia, has made no secret of his ambition to take over, though in the past the two men have handled the regular questions about the succession with a mixture of humor and caginess.

But the gloves appeared to have come off with Costello's statement Monday, which came hard on the heels of major newspapers accusing Howard of dishonesty over the issue. *AFP*

Sudan deemed most dangerous place in world for children

By Megan Rowling

LONDON—SUDAN, UGANDA and Congo are the world's three most dangerous places for children due to wars that have brought death, disease and displacement to millions, a Reuters poll of humanitarian experts showed on Tuesday.

The UN Children's Fund (Unicef) says 1.8 million children have been affected by a three-year conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region, where they risk being recruited as fighters and are especially vulnerable to disease and malnutrition.

"It is a traumatized population and you can see it in the children's faces," said Hollywood actress and Unicef goodwill ambassador Mia Farrow, who last month visited camps for some of the 2.5 million displaced by Darfur's war.

"Everyone has lost family, seen villages burn, seen relatives raped, been raped."

Reuters AlertNet, a humanitarian news website run by Reuters Foundation, asked more than 110 aid experts and journalists to highlight the most dangerous places for children.

After Sudan, they chose northern Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Somalia, India, the Palestinian territories, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Burma (Myanmar).

Unicef says more than 2 million children worldwide have died as a direct result of armed conflict in the past decade, and about 20 million have been forced to flee their homes. More than a million have been orphaned or separated from their families.

"The most dangerous places are those conflict zones where children are actively recruited into the fighting forces, and the current worst offender ... is Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army," said Gareth Evans, head of the International Crisis Group think tank.

"Its recruiting, indoctrination and battle tactics have left countless children either dead, or dreadfully physically or mentally scarred."

During its brutal, two-decade insurgency, the cult-like rebel group has kidnapped up to 25,000 children to serve as soldiers and sex slaves. Each evening, about the same number of child "night commuters" trudge into towns to avoid abduction.

"What makes it even more dangerous is that no one is hearing about it ... The long-standing and invisible nature of the situation has led to an entire generation of children growing up in camps," said Krista Threefoot of Catholic Relief Services.

Congo's first free elections in 40 years, set for the end of July, are meant to draw a line under its 1998-2003 war that killed millions, but conflict still simmers in the lawless east, where disease, hunger and violence kill about 1,200 a day.

"Women and children are regularly targeted by illegal and armed militias and other predators, who perpetrate unacceptable acts of violence and rape against them," UN aid chief Jan Egeland said.

The poll underlined the psychological trauma experienced by children caught up in violence.

"Children (in Iraq) may fear both American soldiers and insurgents; they fear being drummed out of their home if they're from the wrong sect," said Lindsey Hilsum, international editor for Britain's Channel 4 News. "They have no security and no sense of what tomorrow may bring."

Respondents who chose the Palestinian territories cited the long-term strain of living in a place with limited freedom of movement and access to basic services.

Somalia and Afghanistan, where warlords are battling for power, featured due to deteriorating security and widespread poverty. More than a quarter of children in Afghanistan and a fifth of children in Somalia die before their fifth birthday.

Many children living in poverty are forced to work to support themselves and their families.

A large proportion of the world's 218 million child workers are located in India, which came sixth in the poll.

"An estimated 60 to 115 million children are classified as working children—the highest number in the world," said Anuradha Mittal, director of the Oakland Institute think tank. *Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Massacre, car bomb blasts kill 61 people in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—BANDS OF MASKED gunmen went on a rampage Sunday in a predominantly Sunni Baghdad neighborhood, killing at least 42 Sunni Arabs in a gruesome sectarian attack despite a massive security crackdown, witnesses said.

The apparent response to the attacks was swift, with at least 19 people killed and 59 wounded in two powerful car bombs next to a Shiite mosque in a mixed neighborhood of the predominantly Sunni district of Adhamiyah on the capital's north side, an interior ministry official said.

The Sunni killings began in the western neighborhood of Jihad when gunmen set up checkpoints and started shooting people based on their ID cards, witnesses said.

"They also went into certain Sunni houses and killed everyone inside," a witness who declined to be named told AFP.

"Outside the mosque I saw the bodies of 10 men, all shot in the head, and they showed severe signs of torture," said Sheikh Abdel Samad al-Obeidi, imam of the Sunni Fakhri Shanshal mosque in the neighborhood, which was bombed on Friday killing two.

"I blame the Mehdi Army militiamen for this killing—it is all in the open now," he added, referring to the armed group linked to radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

He also accused police commandos, who have checkpoints in the area, of being "complicit in the crime for turning a blind eye."

In the run-up to Sunday's rampage, Sunni and Shiite holy places were increasingly targeted in ongoing civil strife in Baghdad, with the Shiite Fatima Zahra mosque being bombed on Saturday killing seven and wounding 17.

A WOMAN weeps at the scene of Sunday night's car bomb attacks near a Shiite mosque in Baghdad July 10. The attacks in northeastern Baghdad killed at least 19 people. REUTERS

In the past months there have been more and more sectarian-linked attacks in the capital's neighborhoods.

Sheikh Mahmud al-Sudani, the imam of the Shiite mosque attacked Saturday, told AFP the operation was carried out by relatives of Shiites who had been killed or driven out of the predominantly Sunni neighborhood in recent months.

"For the past five months Shiites have been killed and evicted from the neighborhood. Those Shiites killed come from tribes from the south that wanted to take revenge," said Sudani, a follower of Sadr.

"The hair that broke the camel's back was the attack on the mosque yesterday (Saturday)," he said.

Fakhria Hussein, a Shiite resident of the Sunni neighborhood targeted on Sunday but who works outside it, received a call from her son telling her not to come home because it was too dangerous.

"He told me that masked men stormed into our neighbors' home, a Sunni, and he heard shots and screams," she said.

Firas Shimmari, a security guard, received a similar call from his brother who reported that the gunmen were checking people's IDs and attacking them if they indicated the person was Sunni. *AFP*

5 US soldiers charged in Iraq rape-murders

BAGHDAD—FIVE US SOLDIERS were charged in a rape and multiple murder case that has outraged Iraqis, as documents obtained by Reuters on Sunday showed the rape victim was aged 14, and not over 20 as US officials have said.

Days after former private Steven Green was charged as a civilian in a US court with rape and four murders, four serving soldiers were charged with the same offenses, the US military said in a statement. It did not name the troops.

Another soldier, apparently a sixth member of Green's former unit in the 502nd Infantry Regiment, was charged on Saturday with dereliction of duty for not reporting the crime in March.

All five were charged with conspiring with Green, accused by US prosecutors of going with three others to a house near the checkpoint they were manning outside Mahmudiya, near Baghdad, and of killing a couple and their two daughters. The five could face the death penalty.

Court documents described the raped daughter as an "adult female" and estimated her age as 25. US military officials in Iraq say their documents have her as 20. Local officials and relatives had said she was 15 or 16.

Her identity card and a copy of her death certificate obtained by Reuters, however, show she was 14.

Abeer Qasim Hamza al-Janabi was born on Aug. 19, 1991 in Baghdad, according to the identity card, provided to Reuters by a relative. Issued in 1993, it features a photograph of her at 18 months, wide-eyed and with a lick of dark hair over her brow.

A copy of her death certificate, dated March 13, gives the same birth date. She was found at home by a relative on March 12 and had died from "gunshot wounds to the head, with burns," said the document, signed by Dr. Wael Habib and a registrar.

No independent verification of the documents was immediately available.

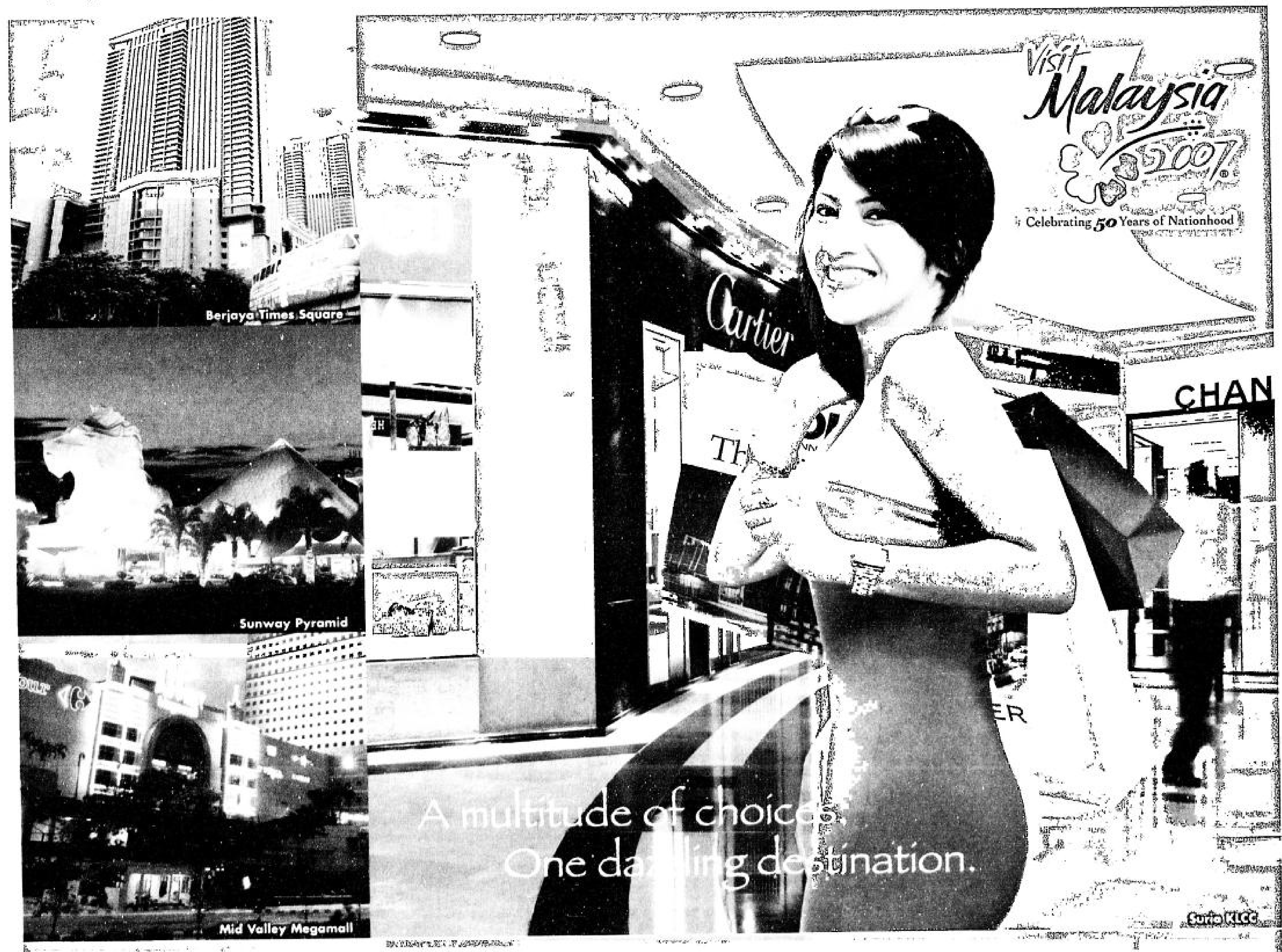
The age of consent with parental approval in Iraq is 15, though it is not uncommon for girls to marry younger in rural areas.

Abeer's sister Hadeel was aged 6 when she died of "several gunshot wounds."

The killers tried to burn the bodies and house to cover their tracks, relatives and local officials have said. Scorch marks and bloodstains can still be seen in the one-story home.

Some relatives have said they would not object to exhuming the dead for forensic tests, a religiously sensitive process.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, balancing a dependence on US firepower with a need to show Iraqis he is in charge, has voiced frustration with a mounting number of cases against Americans and wants a review of their immunity from Iraqi law. *Reuters*



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Dolphins slip past Bombers; Cards win

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SOPHOMORE ROBBY DAVID starred for Philippine Christian University as the Dolphins turned back the Jose Rizal University Bombers, 81-77, yesterday to sustain their winning run in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Taking over from starting guard Jason Castro, David took charge in the fourth quarter along with Gabby Espinas and Ian Garrido as the Dolphins scored their fourth straight victory after dropping their opening game to the Mapua Cardinals last month.

The 6-foot David finished with 22 points, three assists, two rebounds, two steals and two blocks while Castro watched from the bench as penalty for missing a team practice last Saturday.

Sean Co scored 14 points to lead a balanced attack as the Cardinals blasted the Perpetual Help Altas, 68-54, in the second game to improve to 2-2.

Jerby del Rosario added 11, while last year's best rookie Kelvin dela Peña chipped in 10 as the Cardinals sent the Altas in the company of host St. Benilde with 1-3 records.

Espinas, the 2004 Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year of PCU, scored five of his 17 points in the last two minutes, including a tip-in that gave the Dolphins a 76-75 lead.

Garrido added two free throws off a foul by Jason Nocom as PCU made it 78-75 with 41.7 seconds to go.

Jose Rizal, which blew a 53-41 lead, absorbed a third straight loss that came after the Light Bombers took a first setback in three games from the Baby Dolphins, 70-68.

Junel Navaja unloaded 22 points for the Baby Dolphins, who now have a 2-2 mark.

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	3	0
PCU	4	1
San Beda	3	1
S. Sebastian	2	3
Mapua	2	2
Perpetual	1	3
St. Benilde	1	3
Jose Rizal	0	3

GAMES TOMORROW
(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)
12 noon—Perpetual vs. Jose Rizal (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—San Beda vs. San Sebastian

The scores:

First Game (Jrs)

PCU 70—Navaja 22, Guevarra 11, Anacta 10, Lansang 8, Pascual 7, Dalaten 5, Importante 4, Faurillo 3, Ibrao 0, Asucion 0, Degano 0.

JRU 68—Lituania 17, Bejado 11, Gabriel 9, Santos 8, Cipriano 8, Kabigting 6, Pineda 4, Ungco 3, Sta. Cruz 2, Escarta 0.

Quarters: 18-14, 35-29, 49-48, 70-68

Second Game (Srs)

PCU 81—David 22, Espinas 17, Navarro 11, Belga 6, Garrido 5, Amparado 5, Hermosa 5, Salem 4, Santos 4, Graham 2, Vidal 0, Javelona 0, Chien 0.

JRU 77—Dedicatoria 19, Pradas 18, Nocom 13, Wilson 11, Cagoco 5, Hayes 5, Callian 3, Bucao 2, Sena 1, Fenequito 0, Caspe 0, Se 0, Pria 0, Echane 0.

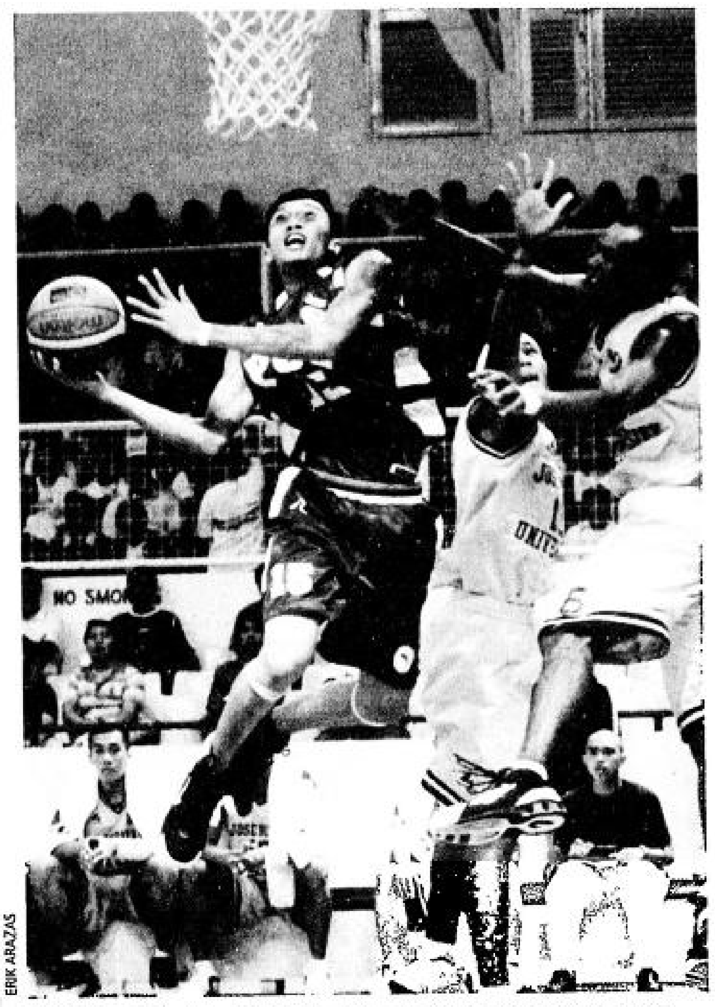
Quarters: 23-22, 33-38, 53-60, 81-77

Third Game (Srs)

MAPUA 68—Co 14, Del Rosario 11, dela Pena 10, Mazo 8, Sumaliunog 7, Tiongco 6, Gonzales 5, Pascual J. 3, Pascual N. 2, Guillermo 2, Palomique 0, Cinco 0.

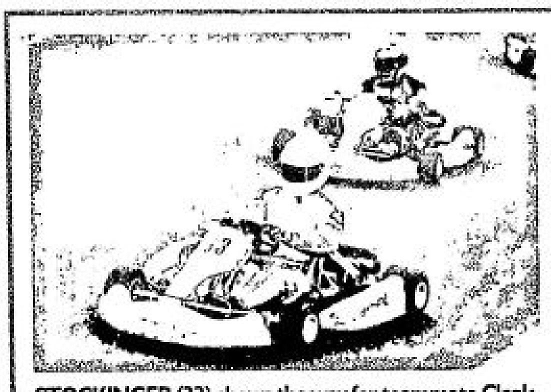
PERPETUAL 54—Misa 17, Manuel 8, Joe 8, Bauzon 8, Lee 6, Mendoza 5, Kong 2, Reyes 0, Llaz 0, Galabin 0.

Quarters: 22-10, 45-26, 55-44, 68-54



ERIK ARAZAS

PHILIPPINE Christian U's Lei Mar Navarro (left) drives off Jose Rizal's Jayson Nocom (center) and Marvin Hayes during their game yesterday.



STOCKINGER (33) shows the way for teammate Cleak.

Stockinger sustains fiery karting form

MARLON STOCKINGER OF BIREL-Accel, sustaining his hot form, dominated the fifth leg of the 2006 Shell Superkarting Series at the Boomland Kart Track in Pasay City on Sunday.

Stockinger, who ruled the Philippine leg of the Asian Karting Open last month, took command from the start, leaving his closest rival and teammate Daniel Cleak behind by eight seconds in both the second heat and final race.

He clocked the day's fastest lap time of 29.623 and wrapped up the 26-lap combined race for the premiere Formula 125 and Rotax Max Seniors in 12 minutes and 27.722 seconds.

Cleak clocked 12:36.715 to bag runner-up honors in both the Formula 125 and Rotax Max Seniors of the event sponsored by Shell Helix, San Miguel Corporation, Denso Iridium Power, Honda Phils., Eastway Company, Aeromed Ambulance Transport and official tires Yokohama Kart Tires.

Maico Angeles made it a 1-2-3 finish for Birel in the Formula 125 division.

Matteo Guidicelli of Alessandra Racing ended fourth in Formula 125 and third in the Rotax Max Seniors.

Sharing the day's limelight were lawyer Jess Garcia of the Cebu Racing Group and Bobby Domingo.

Garcia ruled the ROK Seniors class, towing former jetski champ Jan Jan Gonzales and Mon Tanjuatco to a 1-2-3 finish for the Cebu Racing Group.

Domingo, who checked in seventh overall in the combined race, topped the Rotax Max Novice division over Ysa Potenciano.

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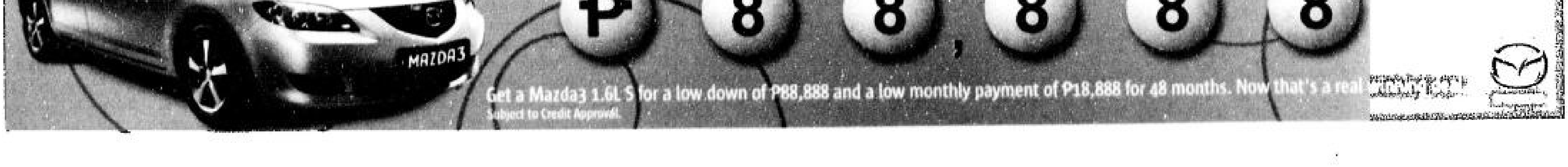

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Ardina loses set to thieves; world jungolf bid in peril

By Jong Arcano

FILIPINO jungolfers led by flag-bearers Miguel Tabuena and JR Gonzales join the parade of teams during Sunday's opening rites of the Callaway World Junior Championships at Torrey Pines in San Diego, California. ROGER MARGALLO

SAN DIEGO—WAS IT JUST A CASE OF THIEVERY OR A car break-in with an added motive?

Members of the Philippine delegation were left wondering after Dottie Ardina, the multi-titled youngster considered as the country's best bet in the 39th Callaway Junior World Golf Championships, lost her golf set following a car break-in at Torrey Pines on Sunday (Monday in Manila).

Arriving at Torrey Pines for the opening ceremony with the parking lot already full, Ardina's dad Ed decided to park their borrowed van far from the well-secured area. Inside was the golf set Dottie has been using for the past two months and several personal belongings.

When the elder Ardina checked on the van an hour later, its window was shattered. To his horror, only the golf set was missing.

The incident prompted them to rush for a replacement set at a nearby store carrying the Ping brand. They didn't find the exact specifications and will be lucky if the set they ordered would be ready in time for the start of the competition on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

Ed Ardina was distraught and suspected sabotage.

"She's been playing so well with those clubs. It's just so unfortunate that this happened on the eve of the tournament," Ardina told the Inquirer in Filipino.

Dottie felt so comfortable with the clubs, according to her father, that she played four practice rounds at the Cottonwood course in El Cajon at 23 under, an effort that would have made her unbeatable in her division.

"It might be that someone was sent to do it, I really don't know," he added. "The van lent us by a family friend is old, so it surprises me that it was the one targeted considering that there was a lot of cars beside it."

How fast Dottie can adjust to her new clubs will determine her winning chances here. She is the most consistent campaigner in the Junior World, having won once in 2002, placed second in 2004, fourth in 2003 and fifth last year in three different age groups.

The 43-strong Philippine delegation sent here by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines with the support of Philippines Airlines, Samsung, PCSO and Pagcor attended the opening parade at the Torrey Pines grounds.

They play their final practice rounds Monday and plunge into action in six different courses Tuesday.

UST ace may be out at least a month

By Jasmine W. Payo

LOSING by two points in the dying seconds did not affect the University of Santo Tomas Tigers more than the leg injury suffered by veteran Jemal Vizcarra late in their game against University of the Philippines in the UAAP basketball tournament Sunday night.

"We're suspecting it's a pulled hamstring, we're observing it day to day," said UST team manager Clarence Aytona yesterday. "He's confined at the UST hospital, he can't walk."

X-ray tests showed no bone fracture, but Vizcarra will have an MRI scan today to check the extent of the injury on his right leg.

A pulled hamstring could sideline an athlete for at least a month.

Vizcarra grabbed his right leg before falling on the floor in the last 17.5 seconds of the game won by UP, 94-92.

The 6-foot-1 starting guard had already scored 14 points by then, including a key triple in the final two minutes.

In the third quarter, Vizcarra's teammates also helped him off court after he suddenly fell on the floor.

"When he first fell, he said he can still play so the staff sent him back on court," said Aytona. "We asked him if he's sure he was okay. He really wanted to play."

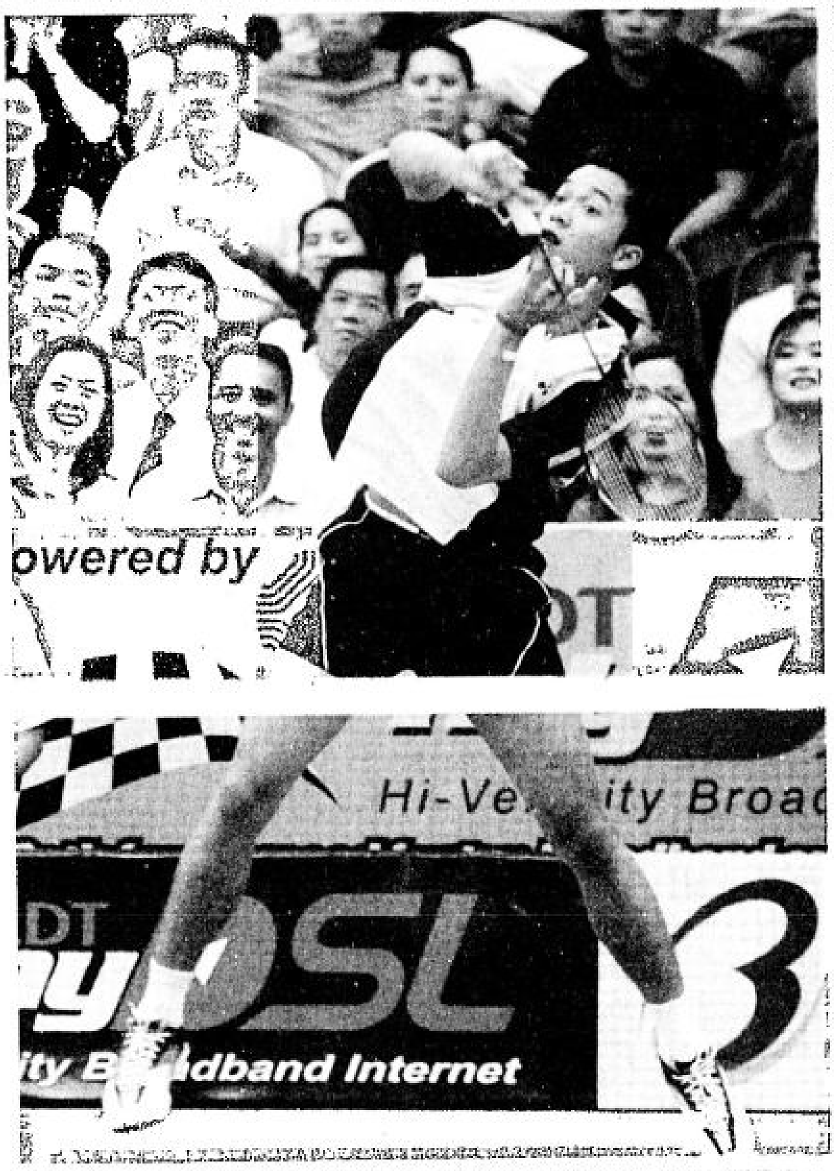
Vizcarra was cut from the team last year due to academic deficiencies despite being the team's second-best scorer (12.8 points per game) in 2004.

"He wanted to make an impact this year," said Aytona.

The Tigers will face the Adamson Falcons on Thursday.

Bigger, richer MVP Cup 2 set at Big Dome

By Francis Ochoa



INDON marvel Taufik Hidayat of Team Asia on the offensive in the first MVP Cup at the PhilSports Arena. RYAN LIM

THE WAY MANNY V. PANGILINAN SEES IT, THE ONLY WAY THE COUNTRY can improve in any sport is to open itself to better competition.

PANGILINAN: We have to compete against those better than us.

"There's no point in playing against ourselves," said the PLDT chair yesterday. "It's like you're not enlarging the gene pool. In-breeding will not do us any good. We have to play against the world."

And if the country cannot bring the Filipinos to the world, Pangilinan will bring the world to the Filipinos.

Thus, the business tycoon will again lift the covers off his Ryder Cup-style badminton tournament when the country hosts the MVP Cup 2 Asia vs Europe challenge from July 14 to 16 at the Araneta Coliseum.

The event brings together the top shuttlers from the sport's recognized continental powers—Asia and Europe.

The Asian squad will feature the sibling partnership of Kennie and Kennevic Asuncion, who will see action against the world No. 9 mixed doubles pair of Tomas Laybourn and Kamilla Rytter-Juhl of Denmark.

"We played them already but it was a long time ago," said Kennie Asuncion.

"We're excited to play against them again," said Kennevic.

Pangilinan hopes that the tournament will further establish badminton as a popular spectator sport and "kickstart the process" of creating a future world champion.

"We have to show the public that these guys (international players) are really good so we can also set the bar as to how good we have to be to be able to become world champions," said Pangilinan.

"That's the only way for us to improve in the sport," he added. "We have to compete against those better than us."

The MVP Cup 2 is a bigger tournament than the inaugural edition, both in prize money and in the players involved.

The total pot is $100,000, with $60,000 going to the winning squad and $40,000 to the losing team.

The Asian squad will be bannered by the likes of Chinese superstar Lin Dan and former world and Olympic champion Taufik Hidayat, the sport's long-time poster boy.

On the European squad, Mia Audina, Gail Emms and Kenneth Jonassen are some of the big names who will showcase their skills here.

The event will not only be beamed live on local television through ABC-5, but to other big badminton countries like China, Indonesia, Britain, Malaysia and South Korea.

"This year should be a good match between the two continents," Pangilinan said. "Also, the preparations for this year's event are much better because we learned from last year."

The Asuncions will be part of the Day Three schedule, when the winner of the event is expected to be decided.

"There's a lot of pressure, but we're excited," they said.

More cockers competing in 'Rambulan' at SJC

THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES CONTINUED TO swell for the P3.5 million "Rambulan sa San Juan" 5-cock derby at the San Juan Coliseum. The cockfest sponsored mainly by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, is slated on July 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, and 29. Fifteen more participants signed up yesterday, led by Francis Nitura of Cyber Ilocano Cockers, Rommel Abe, D. Tuazon of Pateros, Dong Obando, Frank and Peter Cabaddu, Mark Yabut, Ruding Tayag, Mike Tolentino, Scat Jam entry, Art Tolentino,Ricky Tan, Tommy Lim, Nikki Castro and Choy Among. Earlier, members of the United Backyard Breeders Association and Cyberfriend Cockers firmed up their entries, said pit managers Pete Rivera and Ronnie Lacsina. A bonus of P200,000 per day will be won by participants during the eliminations.

188 fights up in Roligon 'Hatawan' derby finals

COCKFIGHTING ENTHUSIASTS CONVERGE today at the 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit as the championship round of "Hatawan Sa Tag-Ulan" 6-cock derby sizzles at 10 a.m. with 188 fights on tap. Hosted by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon, the derby—which attracted 256 entries—offers a prize pot of P3.5 million. A brand new Honda Civic will go to the fastest win champion. Forty-eight participants tallied two points each in the elimination rounds. Among them were Nick Valerio of Rio Valley Grande, Bing Dodson, Marcel Julao, Capt. Emil Chua, Cesar Ramirez, Nino Hemo, Richard Ramos, Toto Que, Nelson Uy, Ramon Saldana, Boy Marzo, Princess Naldo and Jover Dilao.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ori/Tri)—Cash Feeder (4), Black Pearl (1), Vantage (6), Triple Threat (3)

Race 2—(Ori/Tri)—Cheers (2), Ferrarione (1), Hidalgo (4), West N Wild (3)

Race 3—(Penta/Ori/Tri)—Deity (1), Andorra (5), Senority (6) Prince Valiam (8), China Girl (9)

Race 4—(Penta/Ori/Tri)—Friendly Venture (1), Incorruptible/Western Legend (2) Yanong Pilot (8), Bunker Buster (7), Hok Kee Hok (6)

Race 5—(Penta/Ori/Tri)—Sa Wakas (6), Top Quest (11), Mesmerize (2), Morning Nell (4), Wild Orphan (7)

Race 6—(Penta/Ori/Tri)—Hurry Prince (3), Pirouette (2), Magic Dancer (1), Golden Act (6), Best In Class (4)

Race 7—(Penta/Ori/Tri)—Nitty Gritty (11), Loveko'To (12), Powerhouse (5), Ravishing Rally/Portfolio Dividend (9), Little Girl (2)

Race 8—(Super 6/Ori/Tri)—Now Showing (14), Gutsy (12), Playing Cool (2), Empire Lady (8), Divine Right (1), Collective Dreams (6)

CEREMONIAL TOSS: Asian Formula Three star Tyson Sy makes the ceremonial toss before Game 2 of the Gran Matador Brandy PBA Philippine Cup title series between Purefoods Chunkee and Red Bull at the Astrodome last Friday. The pro league invited Sy to the games in support of the Filipino's bid to nail the AF3 crown. Getting ready for the jump are the Bulls' Enrico Villanueva (left) and the Giants' Marc Pingris.

Sevillano 30th in Philly chess

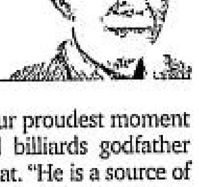
FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER Enrico Sevillano downed American Robert Hess in the final round to finish in a tie for 20th to 40th places in the 34th Annual World Open Chess Championships at the Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel.

Sevillano, currently based in Buffalo, New York, wound up with 6.0 points on five wins and two draws. He settled for 30th in the nine-round Swiss system tournament after the tiebreak was applied.

American Grandmaster Gata Kamsky beat GM Vadim Milov of Switzerland in a tiebreak playoff to win the tournament. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

At 52, Bata Reyes just keeps on going

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

BILLIARDS CHAMPION EFREN "BATA" Reyes has been around so long that many refer to him as a father figure. When asked why he keeps on playing, Reyes merely smiled and said, "I just enjoy the game."

The most successful athlete in Philippine billiards history, Reyes, who will be 52 years old on Aug. 26, stakes his title in the $2 million International Pool Tour (IPT) finals at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, from July 23-30. The first prize money is $350,000 (roughly P18.5 million), the biggest pool purse on record anywhere in the world.

"For my country, I will do my best," said Reyes in a recent interview. "I think my chances of winning again are good," added the Angeles City native who won last year's IPT tour and the fat paycheck of $200,000 in Orlando, Florida.

How did he manage to stay so good for so long? His longtime manager, Rollie Vicente, supplied the answer. "Efren has limitless patience, a pleasant demeanor, strong personal discipline and God-given talent." Only recently, Reyes won the Vietnam leg of the 2006 San Miguel Beer Asian 9-Ball Tour, disproving idle talks that he is already a washed-up player. "Hindi pa siya laos," said Vicente of Reyes, who won the World Pool Championship in Cardiff, Wales, in 1999.

"Efren gave us our proudest moment (in billiards)," said billiards godfather Aristeo "Putch" Puyat. "He is a source of pride and inspiration for the Filipino people."

Now enjoying one of his finest seasons after an eye surgery corrected a failing vision, Reyes will lead a star-studded Philippine contingent in this year's IPT Tour in Las Vegas. Considered the strongest RP pool delegation ever assembled for an international tournament, the team is also composed of veteran internationalists Francisco "Django" Bustamante, Marlon Manalo and US-based Jose "Amang" Parica. The others who qualified are 2002 world champion Alex Pagulayan, Dennis Orcullo, Warren Kiamco, Ronnie Alcano, Rodolfo Luat, Antonio Lining, Santos Sambajon and Gandy Valle.

Reyes is a mainstay of Puyat Sports. Known as "The Magician" in pool circles, he elevated the sport of billiards to a position of respect and recognition in this country. One of nine children of Pedro Reyes and Romana Manalang of Mexico, Pampanga, Reyes skipped last year's 23rd Southeast Asian Games due to failing eyesight. But after a successful laser operation conducted by a team of specialists headed by Drs. Jack Arroyo and Arnold Salud of the American Eye Center, Reyes returned to form, winning several major international tournaments.

Over the years Reyes has always been the darling of the crowd not only because of his flawless style but also because of the humble manner he conducts himself. He rose to pool prominence in 1985 when the Puyat brothers, Popit and Putch, sponsored his international campaign, including stints in the lucrative American tour. In 1994, Reyes became the first non-American to win the 19th US Open 9-Ball Championship, defeating the legendary Nick Varner of the United States. By 1995, Reyes was ranked No. 1 in the world.

* * *

NEUTRAL JUDGES DUE FOR DANCEFEST: To ensure fairness in officiating, the Dance Sport Council of the Philippines will be inviting five International Dance Sport Federation-licensed adjudicators to act as judges in this year's Midyear Ranking and Competitions on Saturday, July 15, at the Philsports Arena. The DSCP is marking its 10th anniversary this year.

Davao pugs rule national junior tourney

DAVAO DEL NORTE DOMINATED THE 2006 National Amateur Boxing Olympic Festival recently by bagging a total of 11 medals at the Mindanao Civic Center gym in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

The Davaoeños, who fielded a total of three teams, won 10 of those medals in the junior division with Danile Philip Fuentes providing the only senior medal, a silver, in the pinweight class.

Fuentes fell short against Marvin Somodio of University of Baguio-Shape Up in the finals. Incidentally, Somodio was named the best boxer of the meet which also served as qualifying for the national training pool.

Supported by Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio "Tony Boy" Floirendo, the Davaoeños' junior division romp included four gold, three silver and three bronze medals for overall honors in the week-long event participated in by some 32 teams nationwide.

Davao del Norte (Asuncion) also pocketed two bronze medals in the women's class courtesy of pinweights Gemma Montera and Anelove Gementiza.

Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny T. Lopez also thanked Lanao del Norte Gov. Imelda Dimaporo and Rep. Bobby Dimaporo for the successful hosting of the slugfest that was sponsored by Pacific Heights.

Emerging as gold medalist for Davao del Norte were lightfly Froilan Saludar (A), fly Jaime Quitoriano (B), bantam Roberto Udtojan (A) and fly Charlie Suarez (A). The silver medalists were lightfly Rolando Saider (C), fly Rey Saludar (A) and bantam Ronald Virtudazo (B).

Philippine Army won the seniors division with six gold and one silver medal, while UB-Shape Up topped the women's category with a 2-1-1 tally.

Suico ready to slug it out with champ Diaz

DONE WITH THE FINAL PHASE OF HIS training in Los Angeles, Filipino Randy Suico flew to Las Vegas Saturday raring to challenge World Boxing Association lightweight champion Juan Diaz this weekend at the MGM Grand.

Suico (24-2, 21 KOs) had sparred for a week with former IBF junior light king Carlos "Famoso" Hernandez and Urbano Antillon in Los Angeles before leaving for Las Vegas along with manager Joe Koizumi and trainer Juanito Ablaca.

The group will be billeted at the MGM Grand.

Superstar Manny Pacquiao will be at ringside to watch Suico battle Diaz, an American who is undefeated in 29 fights capped by a unanimous decision of Jose Miguel Coto last Apr. 8 at the Thomas and Mack Center.

This will be Diaz' fourth defense of the title he won in 2004.

Suico, last-minute substiture for injured Mongolian Lakva Sim, had earlier visited renowned ortho-dentist Ed de la Vega, who fitted him with a custom-made mouthguard.

De la Vega had also provided the mouthpieces of the Pacquiao brothers Manny and Bobby, Rey 'Boom Boom' Bautista, Z Gorres, Czar Amonsot and Diosdado Gabi. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Koronadal hosts 2nd Fuentes Cup

FILIPINO GLENN AGUILAR AND NEW Zealander James Robinson will bring their rivalry to South Cotabato in the second Gov. Daisy Fuentes Cup Motocross Championship slated July 15 and 16 at the Morales grounds in Koronadal City.

Aguilar, the country's undisputed motocross king, is itching for payback after losing to Robinson in a duel last year in Bacolod.

Their succeeding showdowns were even more furious and engaging as they wowed their fans with their daredevil-style of riding.

But this time, Aguilar and Robinson will have their hands full as other participants are just as motivated and determined to prove their worth against the two fancied riders and win the event that serves as one of the highlights of the province's 40th Foundation Anniversary and 7th T'nalak Festival.

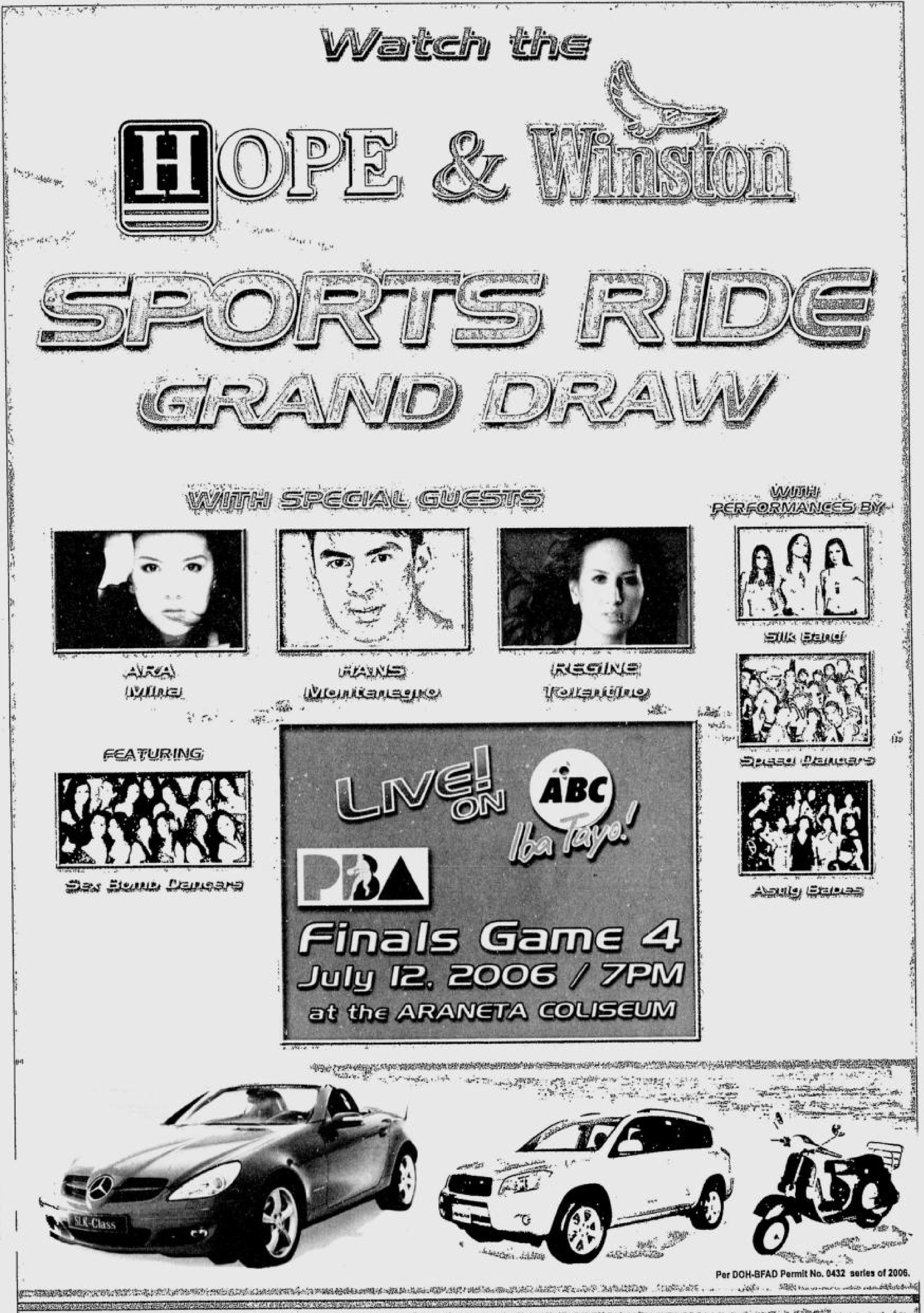
The six-day T'nalak Festival will actually start Thursday, but the All-Mindanao Taekwondo tournament was already held last Saturday due to an array of sporting events.

Out to spoil the Aguilar-Robinson showdown are Jovie Saulog, Jess Pineda, Popeye Rubi, Dondon Yuson and Behet dela Cruz.

Aside from motocross, which is sponsored by San Miguel Corp, and Superferry, other events are golf and dance sport. There will also be a beauty contest, battle of the bands, disco sa calle and gay boxing event.

Tomasian tops writing tilt

A UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS STUDENT bested more than 40 aspirants in the ABC-5-PBA Press Corps Sportswriting Contest held during the semifinals of the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup. Anthony Andrew Divinagracia bagged the plum, beating schoolmate Patrick Ondevilla and Jonathan Terrado of De La Salle University-Dasmarinas in the annual event. Gerard Peter Isabelo Q. Santos of Ateneo actually topped the contest but was disqualified as he already won it last year. Divinagracia will receive a cash prize of P5,000 while Ondevilla and Terrado will get P3,000 and P2,000, respectively, aside from plaques during halftime of Game Four between Red Bull and Purefoods tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum. PBA press corps president Noli Cortez of Malaya, People's Journal's Gerry Ramos, Daily Tribune's John Hernandez III, Tempo's Tito Talao and Abante Tonite's Fidel Mangonon III judged the entries in the contest backed by Alaska, Red Bull and San Miguel Beer.



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I thought Wimbledon dream's over–Federer

LONDON—FOUR-TIME WIMBLEDON champion Roger Federer admitted that Rafael Nadal would have dealt a major blow to his reputation as the world's best player if he had snatched his All England Club crown.

The world number one went into Sunday's final burdened by having lost four times to the 20-year-old Spaniard this year and six times in seven career meetings.

His mood was further darkened by the spotlight falling on his tough draw as well as talk of whether or not he would be able to break Bjorn Borg's grasscourt winning streak.

"I'm very well aware of how important this match was for me," said Federer after his 6-0, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (2/7), 6-3 win had extended his grasscourt streak to 48 wins, stretching back four years.

"If I lose, obviously it's a hard blow for me. He wins the French Open, Wimbledon, back-to-back where I was twice in the finals. That hurt.

"It was important for me to win a final against him for a change and beat him for a change. At Wimbledon I knew it was going be the place for me to do it the easiest way.

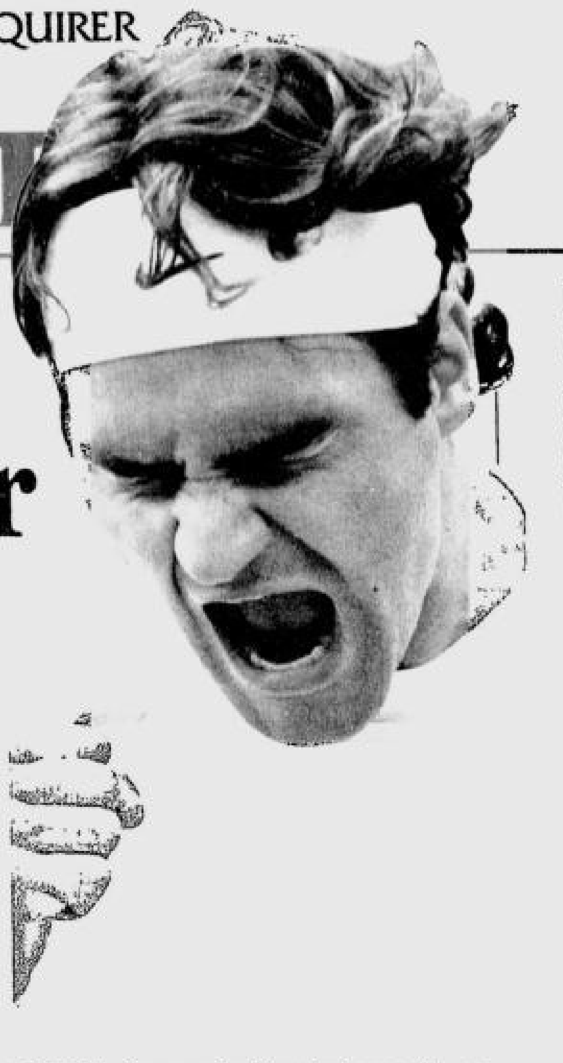
"It turned out to be tough and it shows how much he's improved over the last year."

Nadal had seen off Federer in finals this year on hard court in Dubai and on clay in Monte Carlo, Rome and at the French Open.

But no-one expected Nadal to reach the final here after never getting beyond the third round in previous visits.

Many predicted a stroll for Federer. Not him.

"I came from the loss in Paris and then struggled all the way through in Halle even though I thought I played pretty good, then I looked at the draw here," said Federer after his eighth career Grand Slam victory and 39th title in all. *AFP*



ROGER Federer exults after winning a point. AP

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Chinese girls capture doubles

BEIJING—A SIMPLE TEXT MESSAGE CONFirmed to Zheng Jie's mother that her daughter had won her second grand slam title of the year, and a first for China at the Wimbledon championships.

YAN Zi (right) and Zheng Jie in a victory hug. AP

"Ha ha, champions again," read the SMS message Zheng sent after she and compatriot Yan Zi had beaten Virginia Ruano Pascual and Paola Suarez 6-3 3-6 6-2 to win the women's doubles final in the early hours of Monday morning local time.

Zheng and Yan, who both come from Chengdu in Sichuan province, paired up to win China's first grand slam title at the Australian Open in January.

Yan's family stayed up into the early hours to watch the final and her father -- a soccer World Cup fan like hundreds of millions of Chinese -- missed Italy's victory in Germany to support his daughter.

"When we saw they didn't win until the seventh match point," Yan's mother told the Chengdu Economic Daily.

The pair's victory in the final match of the fortnight on Centre Court capped China's best ever Wimbledon, with Li Na's singles seeding and run to the quarter-finals both also firsts for the country. *Reuters*

Immelman pulls through; Woods 2nd

LEMONT, ILLINOIS—SOUTH African Trevor Immelman sank a 35-foot birdie putt on the 72nd hole Sunday to win the Western Open, thwarting an impressive comeback by Tiger Woods for his first US PGA Tour triumph.

Immelman curled in his sixth birdie of the day while Woods watched from the scorer's hut to complete a final-round 67, four-under par, and finish on 13-under 271 for a two-stroke triumph over Woods and Australian Mathew Goggin.

Immelman became the seventh first-time winner on the US tour this season. His best US showing had been a share of fifth at last year's Masters until back-to-back runner-up efforts in May at Charlotte and the Byron Nelson. *AFP*

Montoya leaves F1 for Nascar

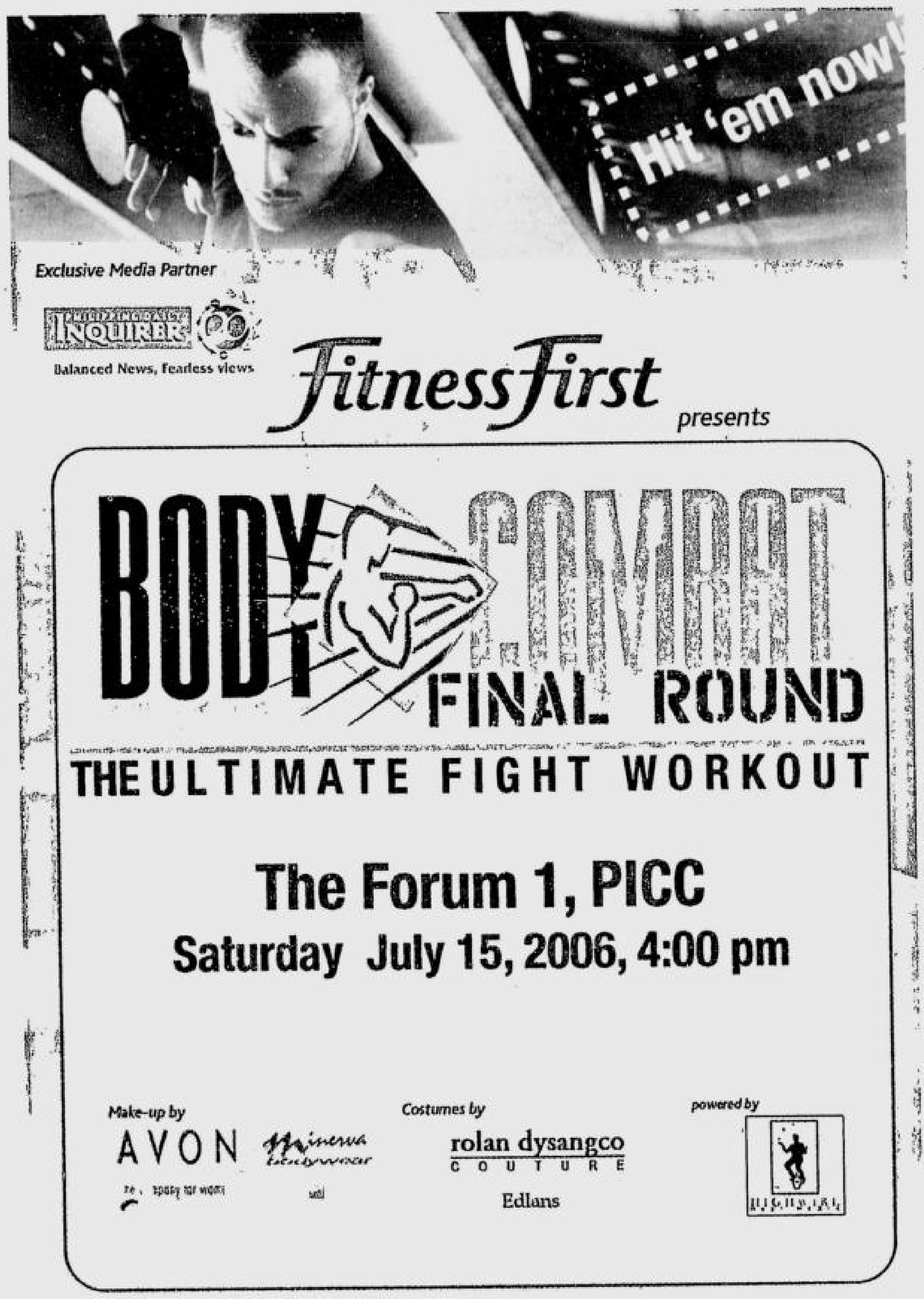
JOLIET, ILLINOIS—COLOMBIAN driver Juan Pablo Montoya shocked the auto racing world Sunday, announcing he will depart Formula One after this season to race in the American closed-cockpit oval series Nascar. Montoya, a former Indy-car star, will leave McLaren Mercedes to sign with Chip Ganassi's team in the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (Nascar), the most popular form of US auto racing. "When people think of moving from Formula One to Nascar, some people think I'm crazy, but I think it's exciting," Montoya said. "I think it's a great challenge for my career. Coming here is probably going to be my toughest challenge ever." Montoya has no triumphs this season and only two podium finishes, his best showing a runner-up effort in May at Monaco. AFP

Lincicome cops 1st LPGA plum

GLADSTONE, NEW JERSEY—AMERIcan Brittany Lincicome won her first LPGA tournament here Sunday, defeating US veteran Juli Inkster 3 and 2 in the final of the two million-dollar World Match-Play Championship. Lincicome, a 20-year-old in only her second tour season, beat 16-year-old sensation Michelle Wie in the quarterfinals and dispatched season money leader Lorena Ochoa of Mexico in a Sunday morning semifinal before ousting Inkster. "Coming through all those players and beating all of them, it means I actually did deserve to win this tournament and I didn't just come through playing low-ranked players," Lincicome said. *AFP*

Yao joins China squad's training

BEIJING—INJURED YAO MING joined the China squad's training camp in Guangzhou at the weekend, raising hopes that he might be fit for this month's world championship in Japan. The 7-foot-six Houston Rockets center, his country's best player, broke his left foot in NBA action in April and returned to China last month after surgery. "Yao is in good condition. His recovery is better than we had expected," Hu Jiashi, general secretary of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA), told Sina.com. Reuters



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Match-fixing scandal aided Italy to victory

BERLIN—ITALY'S TRIUMPHANT PLAYERS believe the Serie A match-fixing scandal actually helped them win the World Cup.

The Azzurri were crowned champions for a fourth time after defeating France in a penalty shoot-out after the match had finished 1-1.

Sunday's intriguing contest was overshadowed by the sending-off of France playmaker Zinedine Zidane in his last ever match for headbutting Marco Materazzi in the chest in the second period of extra-time.

Italian football has been dragged into the mire since the eruption of the match-fixing scandal. Four clubs—Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio—are suspected of match-fixing in the 2004-05 season.

Juventus are almost certain to be relegated, while the other three clubs are facing a points deduction for the start of next season. The sentences will be handed down by a sports tribunal in Rome on Wednesday.

"I'm convinced that if it wasn't for the scandal, we wouldn't have won the World Cup," said midfielder Gennaro Gattuso.

"It gave us an extra push." Italy captain captain Fabio Cannavaro agreed the squad had been galvanized by their off-field problems.

"For me this is the highlight of my career," he said. "The lads were great.

"This victory tastes even sweeter given all that's happened over the past few weeks."

Striker Luca Toni said winning the World Cup went some way to restoring Italian football's battered image.

"We will celebrate all summer," said the Fiorentina striker.

ITALIAN midfielder Francesco Totti and forward Filippo Inzaghi hoist the World Cup trophy. AFP

"I don't know what to say, it's indescribable. I could never have imagined anything like this.

"We've united Italy, from Lombardy to Sicily, who are celebrating in the piazzas.

"We came here with a lot of problems and nobody believed we could do it. Now we are champions of the world."

Italy coach Marcello Lippi saluted his players for a Herculean effort.

"I have to say thanks to these great players," he said. "They have shown great heart and determination." *AFP*

Zidane best player

BERLIN—FRANCE CAPTAIN ZINEDINE ZIdane won the Fifa Golden Ball award as the outstanding player of the World Cup despite being sent off in their final penalties shootout defeat by Italy on Sunday.

The prize is decided by media votes at the tournament.

Zidane received 2,012, Italian captain Fabio Cannavaro finished second (1,977) and his team mate Andrea Pirlo was third (715).

Brazil and Spain shared the fair play award. *Reuters*

AFP

ZINEDINE Zidane (left) headbutts Italian defender Marco Materazzi in the WC final.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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Love you, too, or love you two?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

JEREMY MARQUEZ IS ON CLOUD NINE now that Alessandra de Rossi is back in his arms. But when you are walking on air, you should watch your steps. Jeremy knows that only too well. So he's making sure that he's playing it right this time. Or should I say that he's no longer a player?

"Alex and I are better than ever," says Jeremy. "Stronger and happier. I promise I'll be good and take care of the one I love."

Love is indeed lovelier the second time around, if there's no more fooling around. It should be "I love you, too" and not "I love you *two*."

Not guilty

Jennylyn Mercado was pinpointed by Alex as one of the many girls who had flirted with Jeremy. She claims that Jen kept sending Jeremy sweet messages even while she was in the US filming "I Luv NY."

I cornered Jen about it. She clarified: "Jeremy asked for my number, I gave him the number of my road manager, not mine. I didn't want to embarrass him by not giving any number. I'm wary of cell phone bills so when I was in the States, I hardly texted anybody. I hope Alex and I get a chance to talk so I can prove to her that I'm not the one texting Jeremy. But I won't apologize because I'm not guilty *naman*." If being friends with Jeremy is wrong, Jen doesn't want to be a repeat offender.

Cover girl

Angelica Panganiban doesn't deny that she's still not completely over Carlo Aquino. Their break-up was painful, she says. "It's not easy because we practically grew up together. I went through a stage *na* every 6 p.m., I would cry because I missed him. It's as if my tears fell on cue."

For sure, many guys out there are dying to replace Carlo in Angelica's life, especially after they saw her on the cover of Maxim Philippine edition (ABS-CBN Publishing Inc.'s first franchise title). "She's someone the competition has been dying to get on their cover but couldn't," said editor-in-chief Vanni de Sequerra. He added that Maxim's approach is one of respect and celebration of women. "It's sexy, but it's not just about sex."

> Jennylyn Mercado denies she flirted with Jeremy Marquez

LOVE/ A2-2

JEREMY Marquez

ALESSANDRA de Rossi

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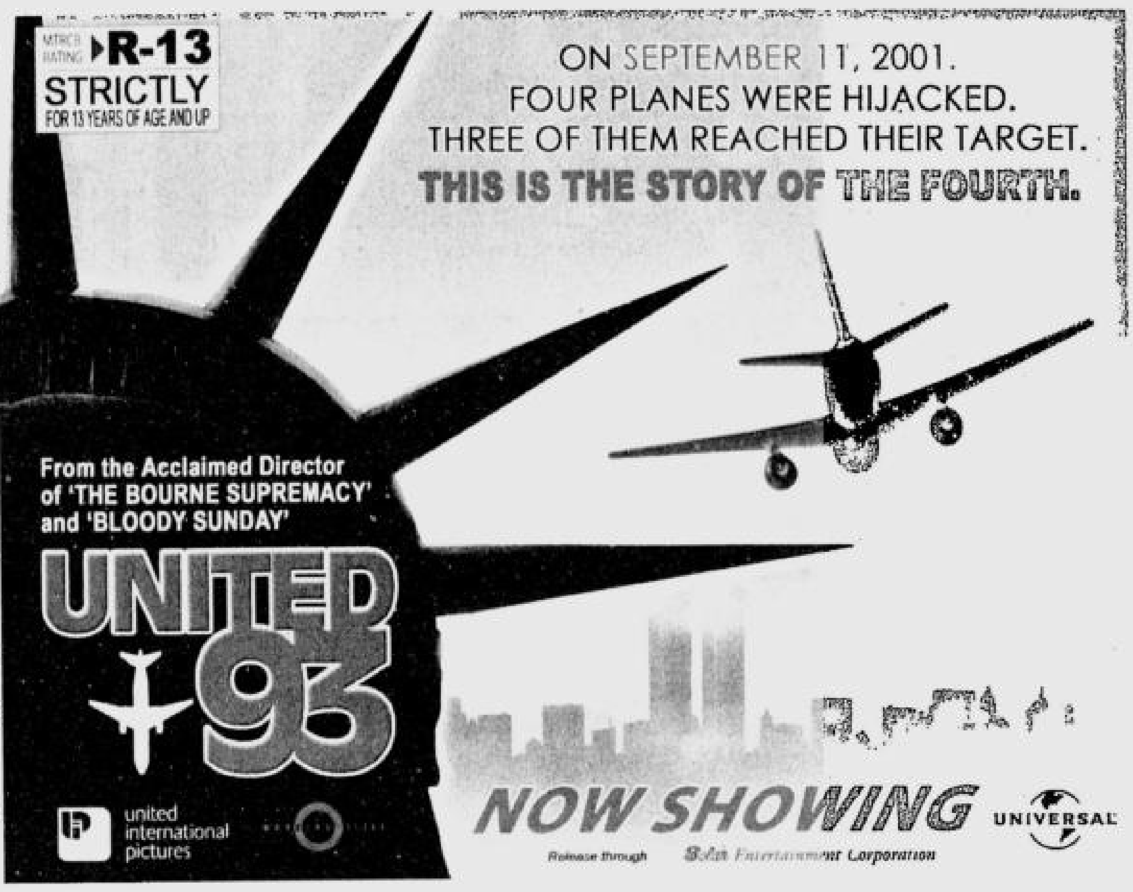

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Cinema 5** - 12:35 PM, 3:45, 10:15

GLORIETTA 1
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Cinema 2 - 12:40 PM, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 2 - 11:40 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:40, 8:40

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Cinema 3 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30

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Cinema 4 - 11:30 AM, 2:40, 5:50, 9:00

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12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

7 LAKE HOUSE
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

8 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

9 SPL
1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00

10 RV Sneak Preview

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12.

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
10:20 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

2 UNITED 93
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 SEE NO EVIL
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

4 SPL
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 LOVE WRECKED
10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

6 LAKE HOUSE
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7 RV Sneak Preview

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE NUN
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
11:25 2:40 5:55 9:10

3 SEE NO EVIL
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

4 LOVE WRECKED
12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10

5 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
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6 RV Sneak Preview

7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:15 3:35 7:00

8 SPL
2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 RV Sneak Preview
3 SPL
4 SEE NO EVIL

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2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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2 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
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2 THE NUN
3 SPL
4 SEE NO EVIL
5 RV Sneak Preview

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2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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4 SEE NO EVIL
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
6 RV Sneak Preview

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2 CHAOS
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 THE RENT
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6 THE OMEN

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What is Superman's birth name?	A. Daily Planet
What gives Superman his powers?	P. The Sun
What can take away Superman's powers?	S. Krypton
What material blocks Superman's x-ray vision?	E. Green Kryptonite
What is the name of Superman's secret identity?	R. Lead
Where does Clark Kent work?	U. Kal-El
Who is Superman's love interest?	N. Lois Lane

How to join? E-mail you answers together with your name, address, age and contact number to movieaddicts_smcinema@yahoo.com or send this page together with your particulars at your nearest SM Cinema branch. All answers must be correct in order to qualify. Multiple entries received will only be counted as a single entry. Deadline for submission of entries in on July 12, 2006.

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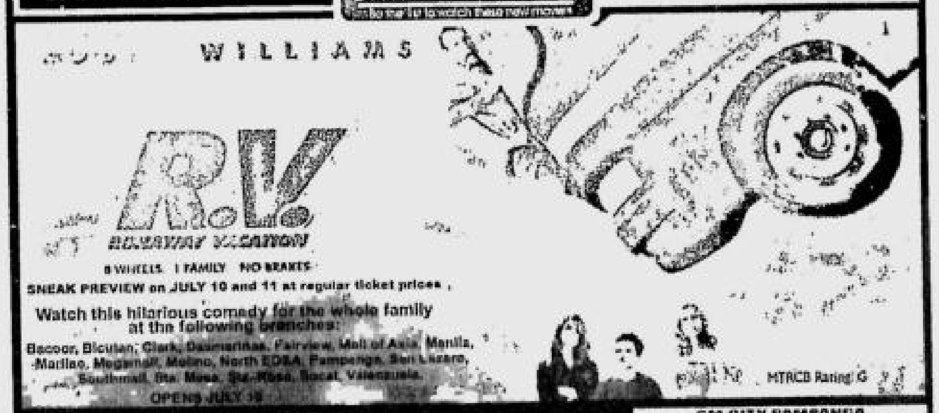

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GARFIELD 2
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
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THE DARK
SUPERMAN RETURNS
RV

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RV
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THE NUN
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
RV
AMERICAN HAUNTING

SM CITY STA. ROSA
RV
THE NUN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
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GRANDMA'S BOY
SUPERMAN RETURN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN
SUPERMAN RETURN
GARFIELD 2
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURN

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Love you, too, or love …

From page A2-1

Just asking

Could it be true that Roxanne Guinoo and Joross Gamboa have split up? Insiders insist that, on-cam, they seem okay but off-cam they've been giving each other the cold shoulder. Have they each found another shoulder to cry on?

Was Heart Evangelista just trying to test Jericho Rosales when she told him that John Estrada had wanted to take her home one night from Capone's while Echo was shooting in Las Vegas? John knows his conscience is clear so he can afford to joke about it: "I don't take home girls. I have them delivered (laughs)."

Jericho confronted John about it during the celebrity premiere of "Superman Returns." Their encounter served as an exciting "front act" for the movie. Gary Valenciano did a Clark Kent and pacified Echo and John.

"Echo has nothing to worry about because I go for voluptuous women," says John. "I'd rather not elaborate but Echo should ask the people who were also at Capone's about what the situation really was that night. Maybe he would even thank me for what I told Heart."

Rock concert

TEATROck, this year's biggest rock concert, is coming on July 15 to the CCP open field. Rock's biggest bands Pupil, Sponge Cola, Hale, 6Cyclemind, Stonefree and Rugis will thrill spectators with a light and sound spectacle. (Call 891-9999). Rock on!

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.)

Tan's big 'school project'

From page A2-4

the set, to make sure everything was in sync."

Apparently, being OC yields results.

Jeff's latest work, "Break Me," Gary Valenciano's tribute to mom Bella, clinched at least five nominations at the MTV Pilipinas Video Music Awards, including Best Director and Video of the Year.

The 24-year-old candidly described his debut movie as "a school project."

Light mood

Since he's almost the same age as most of his stars (Angelica Panganiban, Pauleen Luna, Jason Abalos), the mood on the set was invariably light.

"We just laughed at their bloopers. If they arrived late, their punishment was to feed everyone. It was a very relaxed set," he said.

THE SAN Antonio Spurs' Silver Dancers

Beauties from Texas

SIX BEAUTIES FROM Texas—the San Antonio Spurs' high-stepping Silver Dancers—are coming to Manila on July 19 for a series of performances at Celebrity Jam, a festival of sports, music and entertainment to highlight NBA' Madness 2006.

This is the girls' first trip to the Philippines. They are the fourth NBA dance group to visit in connection with NBA Madness.

The Warrior Girls of the Golden State Warriors were here in 2003, the Laker Girls in 2004, and the Houston Rockets Power Dancers in 2005.

SM music fest

JOSCEPHINE Gomez

SM Megamall presents soprano Joscephine Gomez and guest flutist Ray Sison with pianist Carlos Perion and keyboardist Onard Bonaverte at the Atrium of SM Megamall Bldg. A today at 5 p.m.

Dubbed "Classical Journey," the concert of popular opera arias, classical songs and Broadway hits is one of the shows lined up for the malls' Mega Music Festival.

Joscephine will sing the Neapolitan airs "O Sole Mio" and "Torna a Sorrento"; "With One Look" from "Sunset Boulevard"; "Think of Me" and "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again" from "Phantom of the Opera."

SHOW TIME

Today

Julianne and **Sitti** at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Route 70 at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk Complex, Ortigas

Reuben Laurente at Hyatt Regency's Calesa Bar

Jojo A at RJTV Bar

Tomorrow

Brownman Revival at Mugen, Metrowalk, Ortigas

Wunjo at '70s Bistro. Call 434-3597

RJ at Discovery Suites' Serendipity Lounge

The Dorques and **Session Road** at Tavern on the Square, Greenbelt 3

Juan Miguel Salvador at Metro Phi Restobar, Metrowalk Complex, Ortigas

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Brownman Revival at '70s Bistro. Call 434-3597

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GP

3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
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GP

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R-18

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LOVEWRECKED PG13 1:50,4:00,6:05, 8:15,10:30	SEE NO EVIL R18 2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00	SUPERMAN RETURNS G 12:40,3:50,7:00,10:10

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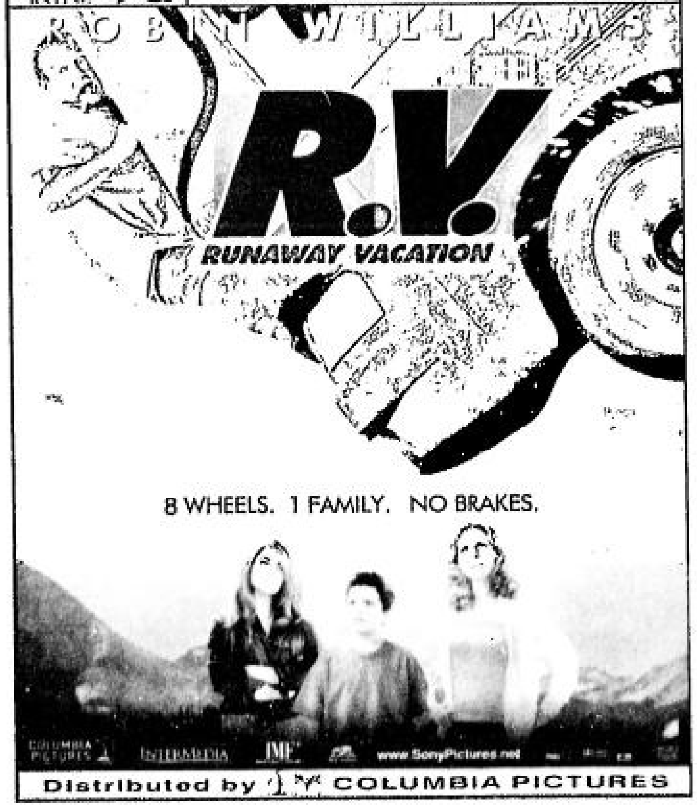

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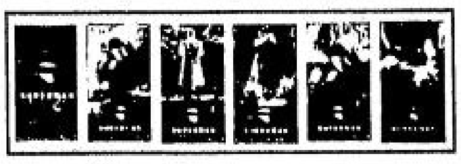

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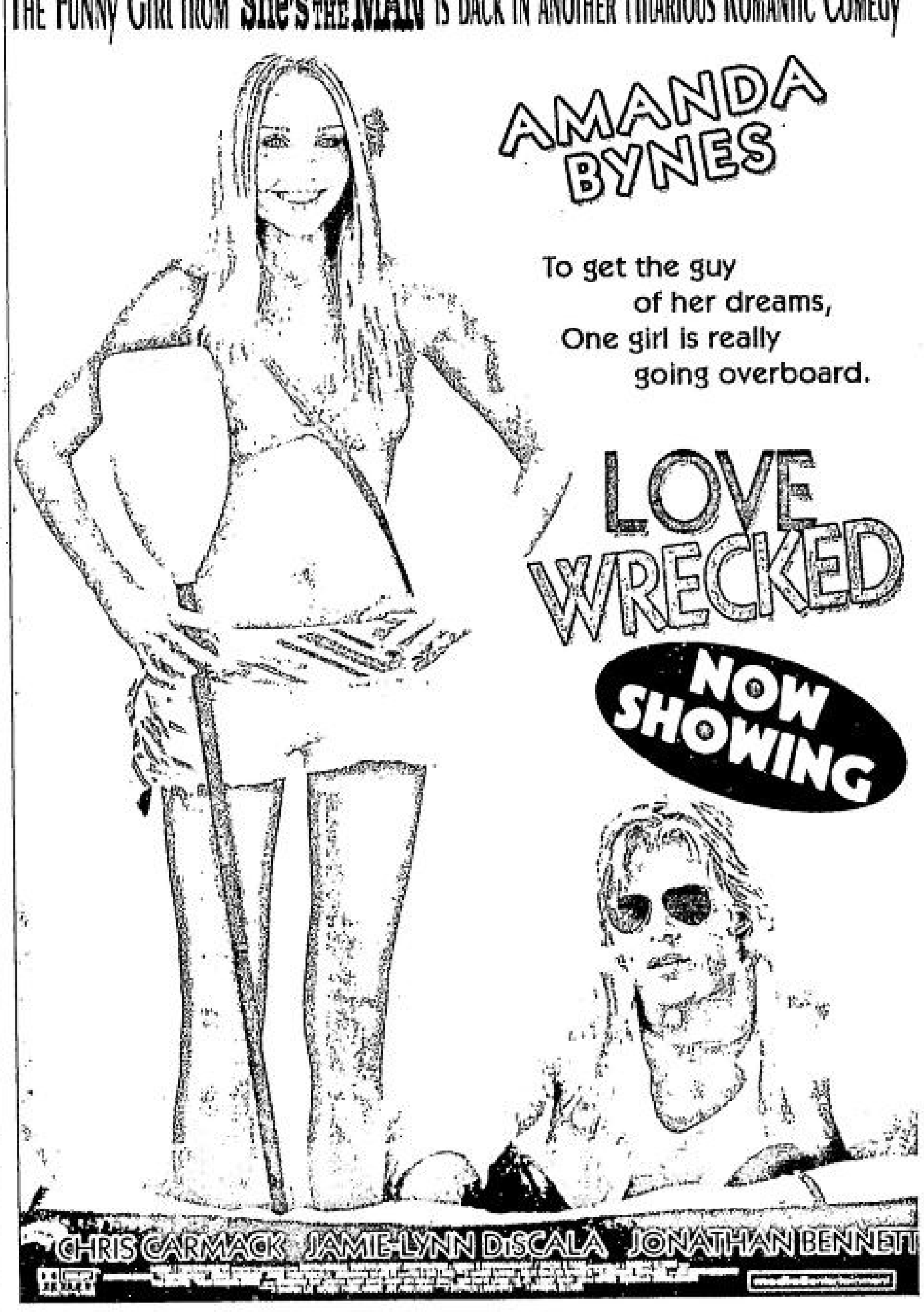
The Funny Girl from She's THE MAN is back in another Hilarious Romantic Comedy



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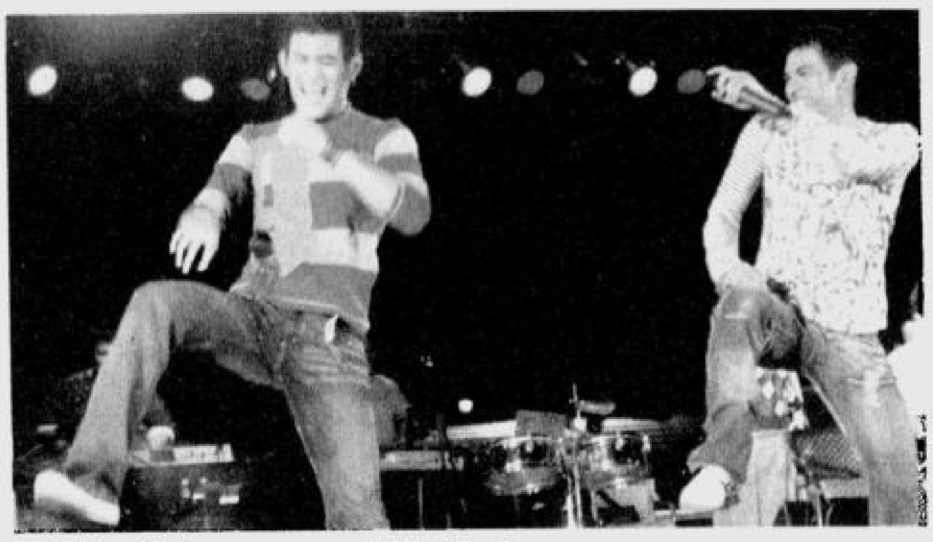
Gary V says goodbye

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau


SON, left, and father wow young and old in Cebu show.

CEBU CITY—GARY VALENciano, Mr. Pure Energy, said goodbye to his fans recently during a free concert at the Ayala Center here ... but not before he and his son Gab rocked the hall and sent them cheering.

Gary said it could be his last performance in Cebu for a long while, since his family was moving to the United States and staying for the first full quarter of the year.

Gary wowed young and old alike, as he always did when he came around. They sang with him when he dished out his popular ballads, and rocked to the beat when he shifted to a dance mode.

Showdown

His "dance showdown" with Gabriel, or "Gab," proved he could still shake it. To the crowd's applause, he sang "Wait Forever," carrier single of his latest album, "Relevance." The song was composed by Cebuano Jude Gitamondoc, who did five of the songs in the album.

In a press conference after the concert, Gary V said the plan to relocate to the US came about after a meeting with songwriter/record producer Craig Jensen and an offer of the Jesus Is Lord Movement (JIL) for him to do a 45-city world tour.

Jensen, who brought Fra Lippo Lippi to the country recently, had urged Gary to reach a wider audience for his gospel songs.

It's time

Gary said JIL's offer convinced him it was time to do just that. In March or April next year, the tour starts, he said. In between, he will be doing some recordings.

Gary said he was excited about the planned move, "to promote my inspirational songs there," but admitted he was finding it difficult to leave old friends behind. And so for him, he said, the prospect is "bittersweet."

In the US, the singer said, he intended to study music production and sound engineering—for both CD and film.

Jeff Tan's big 'school project'

Son of late record producer tries the movies

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

HIS SUPERVISING PRODUCER ROSELLE Monteverde-Teo was the first to point out that "White Lady" director Jeffrey "Jeff" Tan could be a tad OC.

"A bona fide perfectionist," Teo said. "He used up 32 tapes. If you were to convert that to film stock, it would be over a hundred thousand feet of film."

Tan exerted no effort to deny this.

"This is an action-packed, effects-filled movie," he said. "Since I followed the script, I had to shoot one scene from different angles."

TAN: From music video to big screen

Meticulous

Good thing he used a high-definition camera, a Sony CineAlta.

"It produces images with high resolution and, since you can attach a film lens to it, it also offers a good depth of field," he said. "It's almost like using a 35mm film camera."

True to his meticulous ways, he prepared, with the help of a computer animator, 2,000 storyboard images.

He explained: "Storyboards are helpful in shooting scenes that require lots of special effects. It allows the director to estimate a scene's length, down to the last second. It also makes the shoot more cost-efficient."

Tan said he gave his all in making "White Lady." Like the proverbial kid in the candy store, he had a ball toying with the different F/X computer programs of post-production house Ignite Media.

Post-prod

"There are over 300 shots of effects in this movie. That's approximately 30 minutes of special effects," he said, adding that post-production took two to three months in the F/X studio.

He also pulled out all the stops in creating the trailer.

"It was made by three Chinoys," he said jokingly, referring to trailer editor John Wong, producer Teo and himself. "Since Roselle was in the United States at that time, John and I would e-mail her rough cuts of the trailer via video streaming."

A Multimedia Arts graduate at the De La Salle University-College of Saint Benilde, Tan started directing at 17.

"My mom (the late Bella Tan of Universal Records) wanted to put up her own production company to make music videos for her artists," he recalled.

In reverse

The self-taught filmmaker surfed the Net, read tons of books, interviewed directors and cinematographers and studied every medium available, from DV to film.

He has made music videos for artists as diverse as Jay-R and Orange and Lemons.

For Jed Madela's "How Can I Fall," Tan envisioned the balladeer free-falling from a skyscraper.

Tan reported: "We shot the video in reverse. Jed's challenge was to sing it backwards. While we had two months to prepare, he only had two weeks to memorize the lyrics in reverse. We even had a computer laptop on

JEFF/ A2-2

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
MTRCB GP
12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 10:00

2 RV
MTRCB GP
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

3 SEE NO EVIL
MTRCB R-18
1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 7:55, 10:00

4 SUPERMAN RETURNS
MTRCB GP
1:30, 4:45, 8:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
SUPERMAN RETURNS
11:45, 3:00, 6:15, 9:30
MTRCB GP

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CINEMA 1 LOVE WRECKED
10:30, 12:35, 3:05
5:35, 8:05, 10:35
PG13

CINEMA 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
11:40, 2:40, 5:40
8:40
GP

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CINEMA 3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:40, 3:40, 6:40
9:40
GP

CINEMA 4 UNITED 93
11:45, 2:30, 5:10
7:50, 10:35
R13

CINEMA 5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
10:40, 1:40, 4:40
7:40, 10:40
GP

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JULY 29,2006	PILITA C. & ELIZABETH R.	8:30PM

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EVERY WEDNESDAY	CERRUDO . CLASSICO	8:00PM
JULY 14 ,2006	FREEVERSE	9:00PM

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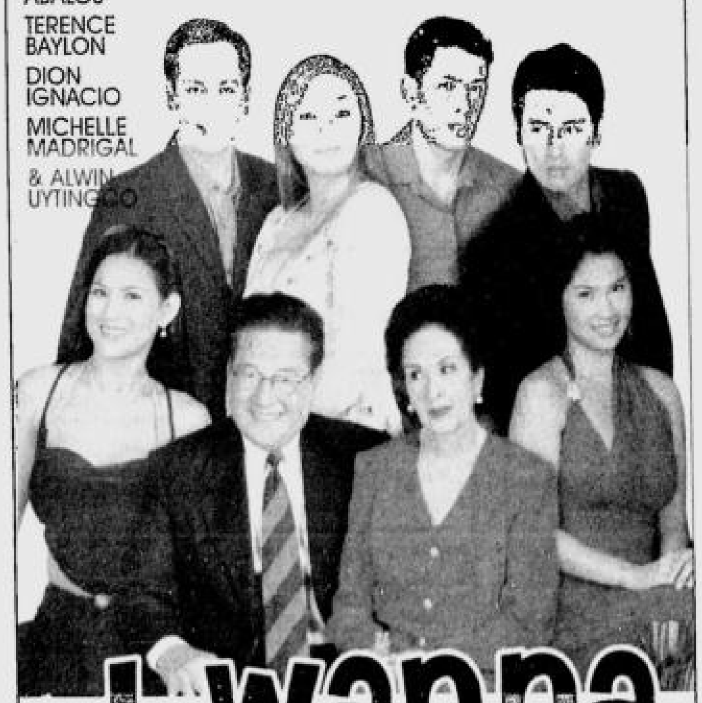
CHERRY PIE PICACHE DIANA ZUBIRI
CHRISTIAN VAZQUEZ ALFRED VARGAS
KEANNA REEVES as Cristy and JOEY MARQUEZ

In alphabetical order
JASON ABALOS
TERENCE BAYLON
DION IGNACIO
MICHELLE MADRIGAL
& ALWIN UYTINGCO



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but not your relatives
written and directed by
JOSE JAVIER REYES
a SEIKO Films Presentation

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UNITED 93
1:30 / 4:10 / 6:50 / 9:30
SEE NO EVIL
2:10 / 4:30 / 6:50 / 9:10
THE FAST & THE FURIOUS 3
2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00
THE LAKE HOUSE
2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
RV
1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:00 / 1:40 / 3:20 / 5:00 / 6:40 / 8:20 / 10:00
PLATINUM CINEMA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
2:20 / 5:40 / 9:00

AliMALL 5
SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:15 / 3:10 / 6:05 / 9:00
SUPERMAN RETURNS
12:00 R2 / 2:35 / 5:30 / 8:25
UNITED 93
12:45 / 3:25 / 6:05 / 8:45
LOVE WRECKED
1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
SEE NO EVIL
1:00 / 3:20 / 5:40 / 8:00
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頭文字
INITIAL D
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Shawn Yue
Jay Chou
Edison Chen
Anne Suzuki
Chapman To
Jordan Chan
Anthony Wong
OPENS TOMORROW

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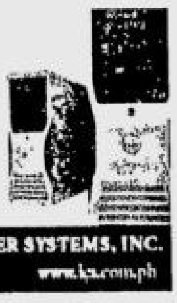

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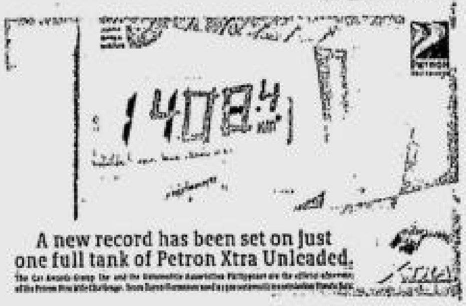


A new record has been set on just one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Peso surges to 52.12 to a dollar

Regional currencies rally as US Fed seen halting rate hikes

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY SURGED TO A TWO-MONTH high of 52.12 to a dollar as offshore investors snapped up Asian currencies on expectations of a monetary tightening cycle in Japan and the opposite in the United States.

Across the Asian region, currencies rallied against the dollar, led by the Japanese yen after weak employment data in the US bolstered expectations the Federal Reserve may soon pause the series of interest rate increases seen over the last two years.

Investors also dumped the greenback in favor of the yen and other Asian currencies on expectations of an interest rate increase by the Bank of Japan later this week, the first in nearly six years.

The local currency opened strong at 52.15, hit an intra-day low of 52.20 and a high of 52.085 against the greenback.

PESO/ B2

IN THIS ISSUE

Net FDI flow hit $500M in first 4 mos. /B4

Oil tariff goes back up to 3% /B6

Gov't debt approaches ₱4-T mark

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S OUTstanding debts inched up slightly to P3.996 trillion in April from a month ago, as the depreciation of the peso increased the value of its foreign liabilities.

The latest debt level was 0.8-percent higher than the P3.962 trillion recorded in end-March, a report by the Bureau of the Treasury showed.

If divided among the estimated 85.3 million population of the country, each Filipino would have a share of P46,846 of the debt burden.

Of the debts as of April, 45 percent or P1.81 trillion were owed to foreign creditors, while the bigger chunk of P2.19 trillion were liabilities to local institutions.

Domestic debts in April were the same as the previous month's, but foreign liabilities reflected a month-on-month rise. In March, foreign debts stood 1.9 percent lower at only P1.772 trillion.

The Treasury said the increase in foreign debts was due mainly to the depreciation of the peso on a month-on-month basis. Government documents showed that while the peso averaged at 51.219 against the dollar in March, the local currency dropped to 51.36 in April.

Domestic debts are normally raised from regular auctions of government securities, mostly treasury bills and bonds. Foreign liabilities, on the other hand, are accumulated by floating sovereign bonds in the international capital market or by being given official development assistance by foreign institutional lenders.

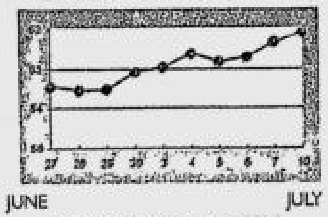
National Treasurer Omar Cruz earlier said that it had been the government's policy of borrowing more from local sources to limit the exposure to foreign exchange risk. A depreciation of the peso makes it costlier for the government to pay its dollar-denominated debts.

The Treasury also reported that the national government's contingent debts hit P580.9 billion as of end-April, 1.8-percent higher than the P570.5 billion as of end-March.

Contingent debts are borrowings undertaken by government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) that are guaranteed by the national government.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 52.12 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 10, 2006

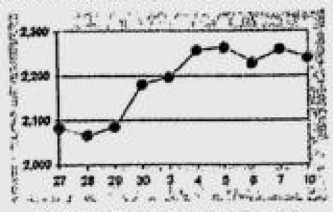
¥ 113.56 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 10, 2006

GOLD: $629.00-629.50

per ounce Hong Kong, July 10, 2006

STOCK MARKET



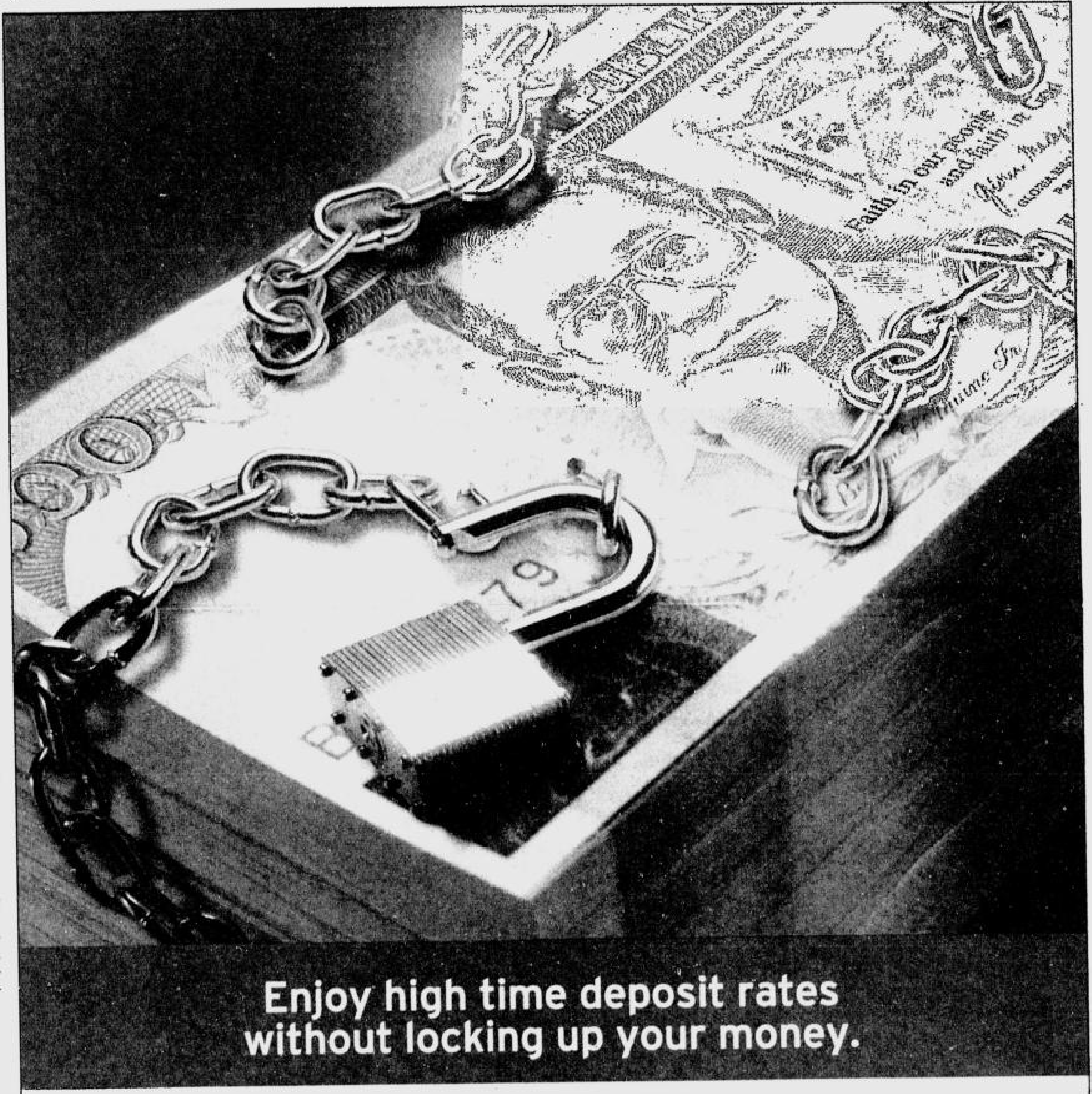
(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.85-PERCENT lower yesterday as investors took profits on last week's gains after losses on Wall Street Friday and on continuing tensions after North Korea's missile launches, dealers said.

They said Wall Street's downturn after a mixed US jobs report generally undercut the region and local investors chose the safer option of taking some cash off the table as a result.

STOCKS/ B2



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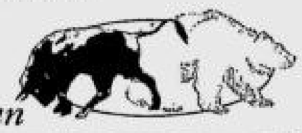
US economy slowing, inflation rising

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

LAST FRIDAY, IT WAS MY WIFE'S BIRTHDAY, I forget which. I volunteered to take her to the Greasy Spoon, a carinderia, all you can eat for P35, but it was closed due to an outbreak of typhoid. So, to curry favor, I suggested Indian food, which we all like but I have been to nearly all the Indian restaurants. My friend recommended the Prince of Jaipur in the Fort. I fort about it for a few minutes and decided to give it a try. The ambience was fantastic, the interior a work of art, and the food excellent.

On the stage, they had belly dancing and 6 scantily clad girls appeared. They were belly good and had been trained in Subic, which is a navel base. I sat hipnotized until my spouse seated herself right in front of me so I could only see their heads. I thought her behavior was abdominable.

On Sunday morning, I woke up unable to move my neck, which had locked into position, was quite immovable and extremely painful. My friend, who lives upstairs, rushed me to the emergency department of the nearest hospital. The doctor diagnosed necrophilia and sent me to a necrologist. He gave me a painkiller and a muscle relaxant and recommended fizziotherapy. He told me not to move my arms and with a dead straight poker face I asked him if this meant I had to stop playing basketball. You should have seen the look of pure astonishment on his face.

* * *

On Thursday afternoon, I wrote in my newsletter that Wall Street would take a dive on Friday so readers should sell equities. I got it right but for the wrong reason. I noticed that over the past two years, the job creation numbers fluctuated according to a pattern, good month, bad month, good month, bad month. I was able to predict whenever Wall Street would rise or fall. However, this month, the pattern changed and caught everyone by surprise.

May was exceptionally bad with only 75,000 jobs created, far below the average of 164,000, so the economists were predicting 250,000 to 350,000. June confounded us all, as only 121,000 new jobs were added. This indicates that the economy is slowing, which would be good news because Bernanke could stop raising interest rates.

Unfortunately, this information was accompanied by a year-on-year rise in wages of 3.6 percent, the highest since 2001. So he is really snookered. On the one hand, he has to raise rates to reduce the inflation rate, which is well above his target of 2 percent or thereabouts. But if he does so in a slowing economy, he risks sending the housing market into a decline and slowing the economy too much.

In the first quarter, GDP was too high at 5.6 percent but the 2nd quarter will be considerably lower, perhaps 3 to 3.5 percent. This is fine because first-world countries are quite happy with that growth rate providing that inflation stays around 2 percent. In countries such as China, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, a much higher growth rate is necessary and sustainable because they are starting from a low base.

In the US, the minimum wage rate is to be raised to $7.15 an hour, equal to what a Filipino earns in a day, even allowing for the P25 a day increase. In the third-world countries, there are so many people living below the poverty level that the governments need a much higher GDP if they are ever going to increase the standard of living of the very poor. So third-world countries can grow at 9-10 percent for years.

The primary job of the Fed is to control inflation through the manipulation of interest rates. After the 9/11 attack, all stock markets dropped like a stone but because Greenspan took extreme action to cut the rate to an unheard of 1 percent, the US market and the rest of the world recovered within 3 months. I think Bernanke will increase rates again in August and maybe beyond, because inflation is the bigger threat.

Since Greenspan took office over 17 years ago, the US economy has become increasingly flexible and resilient. Even if rates continue to rise, I do not believe the economy will go into recession. It will slow, and if GDP falls below 3.5 percent, unemployment might rise slowly from its present 4.6 percent, a low figure. But I do not foresee a recession. Over the past 11 quarters, earnings have grown by 12 to 14 percent. At worst, growth will fall to single digits and the Dow and the Nasdaq may not be able to surpass previous highs.

The Asian region would be affected, firstly by a reduction in exports to the US and secondly by a weak dollar. This would make Asian goods more expensive and US exports cheaper. The one factor, which can make or break any scenario, is the price of oil. If for any reason, it should rise further, it could precipitate a global recession so an attack on Iran or North Korea is unlikely.

The exodus of money flowing out of emerging markets seems to be coming to an end. Eight weeks ago, foreign investors pulled out $5 billion in a week. This gradually slowed to $2 billion, then $500 million and finally $182 million. It is quite possible that last week, foreign funds were buying again. This has certainly been the experience of the Philippines, where the PSEi had a good week due to continued net foreign buying every day. For the year, net inflows have halved from $32.9 billion to $16.8 billion.

Peso-denominated bonds had a good recovery in the past few weeks but appear to have reached a plateau. If people see higher US interest rates, the central bank might have to follow suit and there could be further selling of emerging markets. The US 5-year treasury note yields 5.2 percent; the Philippine 5-year treasury bond yields 9.1 percent, less 20-percent tax, or 7.3 percent. The differential, which represents risk, is too small.

Apex Mining has returned to the market after being suspended for a month due to late filing of last year's annual report and the 1st quarter of 2006. The shares had risen from P1.60 to P6.20 after Crew Gold, which owns 72.5 percent of the company, forecast that its target was 150,000 ounces of gold in 2007 and 200,000 ounces in 2008. Three days later, Apex said that the report was incorrect and that production was targeted at 40.000 ounces. This is such a large downward adjustment that the shares halved to P3 before being suspended.

Since then, neither party has made a statement so we are still in the dark. The mine is still in a preparatory stage and production will start on or before Oct. 1. The yearend of Crew Gold is Sept. 15 and they will then update their website to include all the mines in which they have a stake.

Hopefully, they will revise the production target after consultation with Apex. However, this is not certain because they may prefer to wait until the next quarter, Dec. 15, when it will be operational. So we may have to remain in the dark until then. Without any guidance, it is impossible to place a value on the shares so I will not even try. The shares opened at their pre-suspension price of P3 but rose steadily throughout the trading session, closing high at P3.75 in active trading.

Philex was unusually depressed last week despite a steady advance in the price of copper and gold. There is a rumor that a tycoon is selling a large block of shares to finance one of his other companies. Also, there has been some switching from PX to APX. The 2nd quarter results from PX should be known shortly and the chair reiterated his forecast of not less than P2 billion for the year. Credit Lyonnais has a 1-year target of P6.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Peso surges to 52.12 to a dollar

From page B1

It gained another 23 centavos yesterday to close at its strongest since May 17 this year. The peso has appreciated by about 1.8 percent since ending 2005 at 53.09:$1.

Value traded at the Philippine Dealing System yesterday amounted to $455 million.

"The peso continued to improve against the dollar due to a number of factors—international as well as local. The dollar is still weaker against the other currencies so this is positive for Asian currencies," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters yesterday.

"There are also inflows, particularly from portfolio investments and OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances. At the same time, corporate demand is not yet that strong at this time," Tetangco said.

Although the Philippines has entered the third quarter, seasonally marked by strong demand for dollars from importers, some traders believed the sourcing of some of the foreign exchange had been front-loaded in earlier months when the peso was even much stronger.

The local currency hit a peak of 50.88 in early March but slid past the 53 levels following a regional selldown on emerging market assets triggered by further interest rate increases in the United States.

The higher bond yield in the world's biggest economy as influenced by the US Federal Reserve's increases in overnight rates from 1 to 5.25 percent over the last 17 meetings had lured more global investors back to dollar-denominated assets, causing the shift away from emerging markets like the Philippines.

But recently, the US Labor Department reported that American employers created only 121,000 new jobs in June, lower than the expected increase of 185,000. This led the markets to believe that the Fed may pause its monetary tightening to perk up the economy.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 10, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	212,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	50.5	49.5	49.5	346,100
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	1,180,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	73	75	73	74.5	49,300
International Exch. Bank	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35	36	35	35.5	275,000
Philippine National Bank	33	33	33	33	600
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39.5	3,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	50,400
Security Bank Corp.	47	47	46	46	12,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	44	44	44	44	27,300
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	31	30	31	11,100
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1670	1640	1670	1,410
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	170,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	212	212	211	211	1,600
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2030	2030	2020	2020	420
Ivantage Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.24	416,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43.5	43.5	43	43.5	656,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44.5	46	44.5	45.5	488,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	15	14.5	15	144,500
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.75	23.25	23.75	1,219,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.7	7.9	7.5	7.9	2,643,000
Petron Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	1,703,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.94	270,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	9,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23	23	285,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	32.5	33.5	32.5	33	293,900
Pancake House Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	59,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3	3.05	764,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65	65.5	65	65.5	49,700
San Miguel Corp. B	70.5	71	70.5	71	106,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	2,663,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	720,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	750,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.5	1.5	1,390,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.0925	0.0825	0.0875	35,600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	59,000,000
Ayala Corp.	392.5	407.5	392.5	402.5	279,390
Alo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.74	1.74	892,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	3,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	2,157,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	319,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.8	914,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6	6	6	6	143,000
Pacifica	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	1,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	10,500,000
SM Investments Corp.	213	213	212	213	61,470
South China Resources Inc	0.85	0.86	0.85	0.85	250,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.75	8,169,600
Belle Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	4,449,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Cebu Holdings Inc	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.08	141,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	13,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.48	3,340,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.039	0.039	0.035	0.035	700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	591,000
City & Land Developers	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	4,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	6,074,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.2	0.2	9,640,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.1	500,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	7,400
Sm Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	40,000
Sm Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.8	836,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	70,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	800,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	16.5	16	16.5	65,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	3,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	350,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	950	950	940	940	80
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.45	1,075,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1960	1960	1945	1945	30,200
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	530,000
Imperial Res	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.04	2.04	1.98	1.98	268,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.031	0.033	100,300,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	1,144,900
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	170,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	500,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	120,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	110,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	15,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	1.98	2	58,000
Paxys Inc.	11	11	11	11	23,500
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3	3.75	3	3.75	11,108,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	3.2	3.7	3	3.7	8,025,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	91,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.1	8.1	7.7	7.8	498,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	7,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	6,950,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.023	251,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	152,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	250,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.2	4.2	4	4.05	9,033,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.2	4.2	4.05	4.15	6,352,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	352,300
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	40,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	200,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	230,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	98,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	21,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	478,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	80,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	17.25	17.25	16.75	16.75	1,063,400
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	11	10.5	11	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	244,000

CURRENCIES

July 10, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.780518	1.000000	52.5070
Japan	Yen	0.006847	0.008773	0.4606
United Kingdom	Pound	1.445052	1.851400	97.2115
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100470	0.128722	6.7588
Switzerland	Franc	0.638409	0.817929	42.9470
Canada	Dollar	0.700708	0.897747	47.1380
Singapore	Dollar	0.495882	0.635324	33.3590
Australia	Dollar	0.586812	0.751823	39.4760
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.070505	2.652731	139.2869
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208127	0.266652	14.0011
Brunei	Dollar	0.494312	0.633312	33.2533
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000110	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.020610	0.026406	1.3865
UAE	Dirham	0.212507	0.272264	14.2958
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.281200	67.2720
Argentina	Peso	0.253251	0.324465	17.0367
Brazil	Real	0.359603	0.460723	24.1912
Denmark	Kroner	0.134105	0.171815	9.0215
India	Rupee	0.017027	0.021815	1.1454
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214075	0.274273	14.4013
Mexico	New Peso	0.070898	0.090835	4.7695
New Zealand	Dollar	0.476129	0.610016	32.0301
South Africa	Rand	0.109762	0.140627	7.3839
Korea	Won	0.000823	0.001055	0.0554
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024097	0.030873	1.6210

Stocks down . . .

From page B1

The composite index ended down 19.19 points at 2,238.84 after trading between 2,234.6 and 2,255.88. Volume was 1.19 billion shares worth P766.98 million.

The broader all-shares index retreated 9.12 points to 1,394.59.

Losers led gains 57 to 23, with 40 stocks unchanged.

"We're really ripe for profit-taking and because Wall Street was down last Friday, investors here took it as an excuse to lighten up their load," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

The market rose 3.6 percent higher last week.

Online brokerage 2TradeAsia.com said heightened security concerns following North Korea's missile tests last week also dampened sentiment.

Over the weekend, North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il said he was braced for "all-out war" as the US and Japan pushed for the UN to impose new sanctions his country for its missile tests.

Del Castillo said the market could post further declines in the coming sessions, with the main index's support seen at 2,200.

"We remain very sensitive to developments overseas," he said. *AFP*

Believe it or knot

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE BANGKO SENTRAL WANTS THE BOARDS of all the banks to do… well, a little work.

Believe it or not, according to the draft rules of the BSP, the highly paid board members must lay down the policies on the risks to be taken by the banks.

Does that mean the BSP is finally getting strict on what kind of people the banks can put in their boards? Well, under the new rules, at least a director must know something about bank risks.

But wait a minute, this is the same BSP that refuses to lift a finger against an everybody-knows-it kind of "conflict of interest" among board members of that celebrated bank called EPCIB.

Tessie Sy, daughter of mall operator Henry Sy, founder of the SM group, has been launching all sorts of schemes to take over EPCIB. She was trying to force the schemes on EPCIB stockholders such as the GSIS and the SSS. She simply wanted the group's own Banco de Oro to absorb EPCIB. In other words, the SM group did not want to put up cash for the takeover.

Yet at the same time, while Tessie Sy is doing those things, control of the same object of her desire--EPCIB--belongs to her and the SM group. If this would happen in other countries, people would already be in jail by now.

The BSP is making an assist-pass to the SEC, claiming that the "conflict-of-interest" issue was an intra- corporate dispute to be resolved by the SEC. What?

You mean, public interest is not involved here? Let's not even talk about the P20 billion of SSS and GSIS funds invested in EPCIB. What if, to drop the valuation of EPCIB down to a fire-sale bargain, the SM group as manager would run it to the ground?

In my book, when somebody is in a position to ruin a bank to his or her advantage, it's always a matter of public interest. Well, the bank accepts deposits from the public, doesn't it?

And so what is this new rule about the BSP's assigning "accountability" to the boards of the banks? It is just for the BSP to comply with international standards in banking. It's just a press release thing, with the BSP paying lip service to public protection and all that. Actually, implementing the rules is something else.

***

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves just came up with a brilliant idea on how this country could turn off more investors.

The good secretary just dipped his finger into the scandal featuring the YNN consortium, the contract-peddling group that won the PSALM-conducted bidding for the Masinloc power plant.

YNN failed to meet its commitments under the bidding rules. And so, according to Teves, this cute administration of Gloriaetta can just forfeit the $14-million bond of YNN but, at the same time, give YNN a 30-day extension to meet its commitments.

Question: What if YNN meets the commitments after 30 days, must this cute administration give back the forfeited $14-million bond? Another question: If this cute administration does not give back the bond, shall YNN sue it? Still another question: If YNN cannot fulfill the contract after those 30 days, what will be the penalty? There's no more bond to forfeit, right? So what?

Look, the forfeiture is the penalty for YNN's failure to meet its commitments in the contract. If YNN fulfills its commitments after those 30 days, the condition for the forfeiture will no longer exist.

Thus, the bright idea of Teves can turn off investors because it further erodes the credibility of this cute administration.

Under the Masinloc sale contract, YNN must give an upfront payment of $227 million. Again--that's UPFRONT! It should have been given right after the award of the contract, period.

Almost two years later, YNN still has to make the upfront payment because it did not have the money simply because it was just a "deal broker."

That's why things get messed up. The authorities do not follow the rules that they themselves set up. YNN did not follow the rules from the start. How could a company like YNN, with a capital just enough for a tricycle, be allowed to bid--and even declared the winner--in the privatization of a plant worth billions of pesos?

There's only one answer, and that is, PSALM was and still is sleeping with YNN. And now PSALM wants to give YNN another chance because of the letter from Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, who is helping the Malaysian firm Ranhill.

To do the YNN-Ranhill deal and please Badawi, therefore, PSALM must violate its rules against public interest. Okay then, for a fair exchange, let's all go to Malaysia and mess up that country's rules. I am sure they won't mind our returning the favor.

***

Whatever happens in the court case against the Comelec on the ACM (automated counting machines), if something was really wrong in the project, this country must still pursue election automation. It is the only way we can prevent suspicions of massive cheating in future elections. And to do that, all we need to do is, everybody should just shut up for a while.

Really, if something was wrong in the Comelec's ACM project way back in 2004, hundreds of people should an-

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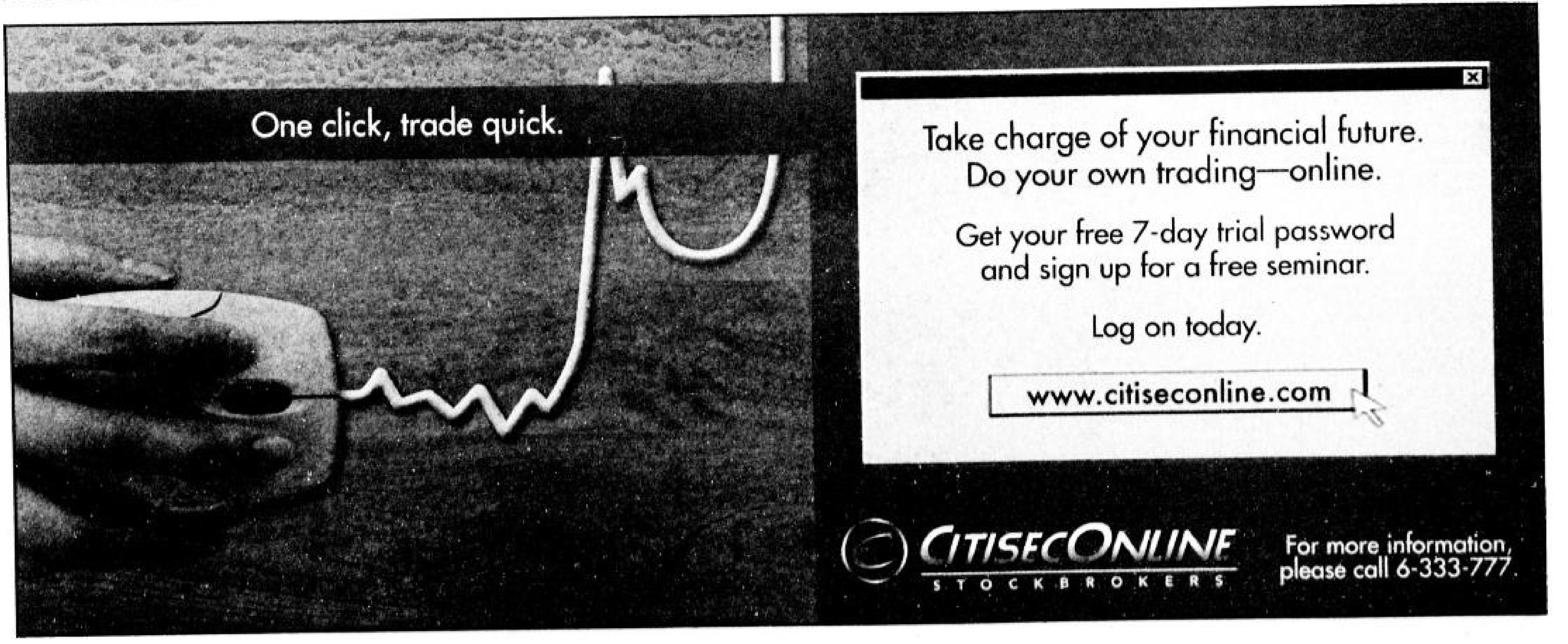

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GOINGS ON

Seminar on foreclosure

THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES WILL hold a seminar on asset foreclosures on Aug. 4, 2006 at The Peninsula Manila, Makati City.

The "Defensive and Offensive Strategies Against Asset Foreclosures" seminar aims at informing participants how to fight unjust asset foreclosures and employ the best legal techniques against these.

The event features discussions on recent court rulings in favor of the borrowers, updates on rehabilitation proceedings as well as on properties sold under the Special Asset Vehicle law, and suspension of payments.

Lawyers Jim V. Lopez, author of a book on asset protection law, and Arturo de Castro will teach participants effective strategies against asset foreclosure.

For further information, contact 842-7148 or 59 and www.cgbp.org.

UBP-TIM partnership

UNIONBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES HAS SUCCESSfully implemented CardPro—a complete card and payment processing solution.

The rollout was done through System Access Genesys (SAG), which developed CardPro, and Total Information Management (TIM) Corp., a systems integrator for banking solutions.

CardPro replaced UnionBank's mainframe-based legacy system. With CardPro, UBP further leverages on advanced information technology to pursue its key market differentiation strategy that is based on continuous innovation and unparalleled customer service.

CardPro is expected to enable the bank to develop and introduce innovative credit and debit card products that would exceed customer expectations, said UBP Credit Card

CrimsonLogic's e-stamping

CRIMSONLOGIC PHILIPPINES, AN APPLICATION service provider , will introduce electronic stamping to banks and government agencies to help them meet their revenue targets and improve documentary stamp tax (DST) collection efforts.

Also called e-stamping, it is a financial service that enables financial and government institutions to process documents through the Internet. It can generate management reports and accomplish reportorial requirements for the tax collecting agency. It allows institutions to analyze the data collected and develop and implement strategic policies enabling the agencies to meet and exceed their revenue targets.

The system stamps documents electronically by issuing a secure stamp certificate via the Internet. It replaces the existing impressed or physical stamp on a document. Details like transaction amount and description, payor / payee information are printed on the certificate with the amount of DST paid.

Net FDI flow hit $500M in first 4 mos.

BSP says investors remain upbeat on RP investment climate

Regulators start preparing for digital TV age

By Daxim L. Lucas

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS have set in motion a plan that may, in time, cause the phase-out of traditional television signals and bring the local broadcast industry into the digital TV age.

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) will circulate before the end of this month a consultative document among major players in the industry to help the agency come up with standards for the country's foray into digital TV, NTC Commissioner Ronald O. Solis said in a meeting with executives of Samsung Corp., a leading manufacturer of digital TV equipment in Korea.

Solis said the consultative document and the comments it would generate from industry stakeholders—broadcast firms, equipment manufacturers, potential content providers and consumer groups--would help regulators define the standards and parameters of the new technology.

NTC's approach to the introduction of this new technology will mimic its moves when it set the policies for the third-generation (3G) mobile phone networks last year, he said.

Digital DTV is a new type of broadcasting technology that is expected to transform traditional television delivery platforms. By transmitting the information used to make a TV picture and sound as "data bits" like a computer, a digital broadcast can carry more information than is currently possible with analog technology.

The technology will allow the transmission of pictures with higher resolution for better picture and sound quality than currently available or the transmission of several "standard definition" TV programs at once, called multicasting."

Standard definition digital TV pictures would be similar in clarity and detail to the best TV pictures being received and displayed today using the current analog broadcast system and TV receivers. The technology can also be used to provide interactive video and data services, including Internet connections, that are impossible to do with the analog technology.

The NTC chief noted that there were several digital TV markets competing for dominance in the budding industry, and that the consultation process would help regulators determine which standard was best suited for the local environment.

"We want to look at the US, Korean, and European models," he said.

"Everybody around the world is migrating to digital TV, we we have to look at this, too," he said.

Solis said the matter of when digital TV would take off in the local market would depend, to a large extent, on how fast the prices for the service and the technology would down to make them affordable to the average consumer.

"Samsung is the first group invited to give a presentation on the matter," Solis told officials of the Korean firm.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES POSTED $500 million in net foreign direct investments in January to April this year, flowing mainly to the real estate, banking, manufacturing and construction sectors.

The amount was 2.7 percent higher than the $487 million registered in the same period last year, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday.

For the month of April alone, net FDI inflows to the country was $70 million which was, however, lower than April last year's $101 million.

"Investors remained upbeat on the country's investment climate given the improved fiscal position arising from the surplus registered in April, strong macroeconomic fundamentals and better-than-expected first quarter performance of corporations," Tetangco said.

Unlike portfolio inflows, which are more volatile, FDIs represent investments in brick-and-mortar businesses that are usually capital- and labor-intensive such as those spent for the construction of new factories, power plants and call centers.

Tetangco noted that the 2.7-percent expansion in net FDIs in the first four months of the year was a result of higher surplus in the "other capital" account, representing inter-company accounts between investors and their corresponding foreign principals, which amounted to $184 million during the four-month period versus only $11 million a year ago.

"The reinvested earnings account was also rising as foreign banks opted to retain their earnings in local branches," Tetangco said.

Net equity inflows amounted to $280 million during the four-month period which was, however, lower than the $467 million last year.

The United States and Japan remained the top contributors of long-term foreign equity investments.

A new global phenomenon called south-to-south flows, characterized by increased capital flows between developing countries, has opened up opportunities for the Philippines to hedge against external shocks by attracting more stable investments.

BSP director for research Iluminada Sicat said in the case of FDIs to the Philippines, the most significant increases in the last five years came from newly industrializing countries (NICs). She said FDI flows to the country were going to manufacturing, real estate and banking.

Based on BSP data, FDI flows from three Asian NICs - South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan - to the Philippines surged to $258.1 million in 2005 from only $48.70 million in 2000.

The GDF 2006 noted that the growing FDI flows between developing countries in recent years had compensated for the cuts in FDI flows from First World countries.

"South-to-south capital flows have also opened opportunities for low income countries, as developing country investors are often better than the others in handling the special risks encountered in poor countries," the GDF said.

Jollibee earmarks $1M for US stores

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP. IS SETting aside about $1 million for its store expansion in the United States beginning this year, sources told the INQUIRER.

Jollibee is slated to open its 11th US store in Panorama City, California on July 22.

It is spending up to $450,000 for this store.

The company is also setting up its 12th US store in Las Vegas, home to around 40,000 Filipinos, in the first quarter of 2007. Jollibee will occupy a 250-square meter lot, next to a planned new branch of Red Ribbon Bakeshop. The Las Vegas store will cost about $400,000.

Sales at Jollibee's stores in the United States have been brisk, growing by as much as 44 percent in the second quarter over year-ago level, sources said.

Martin L. Español, analyst at online broker 2TradeAsia.Com, said in a research report that Jollibee's net income might hit P1.66 billion this year, almost the same as its net income of P1.7 billion in 2005.

Jollibee chair Tony Tan Caktiong earlier said he expected this year to be a "difficult year" for Jollibee due to weak consumer spending and higher costs of utilities.

The Jollibee Food Group generated consolidated revenue of P7.6 billion in the first quarter, up 16 percent year on year, driven by additional stores and earnings from its newly acquired bakeshop, Red Ribbon. Jollibee opened 37 new stores in the first quarter: 13 for Jollibee; nine for Chowking; five for Red Ribbon; three for China's fast food chain Yonghe King; and one in Dubai for Chowking.

Apex net loss hit P9.9M in Q1

SHARES OF APEX MINING CORP. WERE YESterday's biggest winners at the stock market following the lifting of the company's month-long trade suspension.

Shares of Apex were among those suspended by the Philippine Stock Exchange on June 1 for their failure to meet reportorial requirements.

Apex A share price surged 25 percent to P3.75 per share. Apex B shares also soared 23.3 percent to P3.70 a share.

Apex said it incurred a net loss of P9.9 million in the first quarter of the year, up from P5.1 million in the same period last year. Apex incurred a net loss of P46 million last year . As of December last year, the company's current liabilities exceeded current assets by P86 million.

For the first quarter of 2006, some P52.9 million was advanced by company affiliates: P10.4 million from Mapula Creek Gold Corp., P23.4 million from Teresa Crew Gold Phils Inc., and P19 million from Crew Minerals Phils. The amount was used for the rehabilitation of the mining firm's plant site.

Apex controls a mineral property in Maco Municipality, Co mpostela Valley in Eastern Mindanao. Its mining licenses cover about 5,000 hectares.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Breaktime

From page B3

swer for it. The Comelec did everything in consultation with Namfrel, the civil society, the IT community, and a battalion of technical advisers.

And they say all sorts of bad things about the project today, such as the machines do not work. Unfortunately, Mega Pacific got a 100-percent accuracy rating from the DOST. In fact, the DOST said the Mega Pacific system was technically superior to that of the LOSING bidder. There--that's another government agency involved in the project. It deserves lethal injection, right?

Come on, the problem is that the Supreme Court did not even allow the Comelec to demonstrate how the ACMs worked. So why don't we let Comelec demonstrate them now to the public? If the ACMs work, we all should shut up.

The truth is, the Comelec followed all the bidding and technical procedures that were devised during the consultation. Out of 50 bidders, only two got passing marks, namely, the eventual winner Mega Pacific and Total Information management or TIM.

The government stood to save something like P2.3 billion by awarding the project to Mega Pacific, and so the Comelec awarded the contract to the company.

But the loser apparently could not take it. So they went to some influential people in the business community, denounced the bidding as "cooked," and the Comelec as crooked.

And the rest is history. We all know what happened. The Supreme Court stopped the project. And now we question the credibility of the 2004 elections.

***

Next time, if space permits, we'll tell you about the insurance playboy's affair with a woman who claims ownership of a lot in Makati, which lot the playboy used for business to the chagrin of the woman's in-laws.

RIVIERA GOLF CLUB, INC.

NOTICE OF SALE OF DELINQUENT RGCI SHARES AT AUCTION

N OTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE RIVIERA GOLF CLUB, INC. WILL SELL THE FOLLOWING DELINQUENT SHARES AT A PUBLIC AUCTION PURSUANT TO THE BY-LAWS, FOR NON-PAYMENT OF THE MONTHLY DUES:

A-1512
B-0232
A-0040
A-0242
A-1162
A-1325
A-1561
B-0363
B-0341
B-0152
C-0025
C-0109
A-0398
A-0985
A-1118
A-0918
A-1509
A-0311
A-1414
B-0137
A-1119
A-0565
B-0280
A-1045
A-0963
C-0282
B-0012
B-0140
B-0071
C-0161
C-0322
A-1506
A-0327
A-1621
A-0351
A-0566
A-0156
A-1520
A-0340
B-0095
B-0274
A-1830
C-0301
A-1701
A-0646
B-0090
B-0311
C-0159
C-0310
C-0100
A-1304
A-1062
A-1210
A-1090
A-1436
A-0576
A-1416
A-1448
A-1703
B-0138
A-0567
C-0322
A-1616
A-1268
B-0373
B-0207
C-0248
C-0108
C-0057
A-1046
A-1387
A-0188
A-1704
A-1040
A-1754
A-0104
A-1048
B-0343
A-0919
A-1707
A-1289
A-0732
A-1189
B-0393
B-0203
C-0230
C-0246
A-1813
A-1810
A-0881
A-1675
A-1688
A-1489
A-0174
A-0747
A-1784
A-1431
A-0466
A-1689
A-1547
A-1692
A-0586
B-0339
B-0212
C-0111
C-0144
A-1760
A-1785
A-0491
A-0639
A-1015
A-1377
A-1834
B-0179
A-1464
A-1685
A-0684
A-1672
A-1330
A-0526
B-0276
B-0013
C-0023
C-0238
A-1696
A-0717
A-1698
A-0493
A-1429
A-1428
A-1316
A-0763
A-0867
A-0592
A-0580
A-0104
A-1489
A-0750
B-0150
B-0139
C-0024
C-0145
A-1671
A-0400
A-1700
A-1122
A-1357
A-0739
A-1790

THE AUCTION DATE IS SET ON JULY 14, 2006 AT 10:00 A.M., AT THE TEE PAVILION, RGCI, SILANG, CAVITE. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE BIDDING. PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER WITH THE CLUB PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL TIME OF BIDDING

(Sgd.) ATTY. ROLANDO G. BORJA
CORPORATE SECRETARY

(PDI – JULY 11, 2006)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

DepED

Telefax: 636-6543
Direct Line: 633-9043
Trunk Line: 632-1361 local 2094
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for supply of **venues with board and lodging, accommodations, conference rooms for workshops, trainings, or seminars** indicated below

Item No.	Description of Events/ Date Needed/ No. of pax/ Enduser	No. of pax	Location/ Within the Area of:	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in Philippine Peso	Bid Submission Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Prebid Conference
1	Seminar Workshop on Public Accountability & Graft Prevention / Sept. 5-7, 2006/SDD-HRDS	100	Rizal Province	Php 440,000.00	On or before **10:00 a.m., August 8, 2006**, at the Bulwagan Ng Karunungan, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City	**10:00 a.m. July 25, 2006** at the Bulwagan ng Karunungan, DepED Complex, Pasig City
2	Basic English Training for Non-Teaching Personnel/ Sept. 26-28, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	100	Butuan City	Php 420,000.00		
3	Training on GAD Program on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children/ Sept. 26-29, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	115	Tagaytay City	Php 690,000.00		
4	Training on GAD program on Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children/ Oct. 24-27, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	115	Davao City	Php 690,000.00		
5	Training on GAD Program on Monitoring and Evaluation/ Nov 14-16, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	115	Tagaytay City	Php 552,000.00		
6	Training on GAD Program on Monitoring and Evaluation/ Nov. 28-30, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	115	Tacloban City	Php 552,000.00		
7	Training on GAD Program on Monitoring and Evaluation/ Dec. 12-14, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	124	Davao City	Php 595,000.00		
8	Training on Development Counseling Skills for Guidance Counselors and Coordinators/ Nov. 7-9, 2006/ SDD-HRD	115	Davao City	Php 506,000.00		
9	Training on Development Counseling Skills for Guidance Counselors and Coordinators/ Nov. 21-23, 2006/ SDD-HRDS	115	Zamboanga City	Php 460,000.00		
			Total	Php 4,905,000.00		

Bids received that exceed the ABC per Item shall be rejected. Bids in excess of Php 1,200.00/pax/day shall also be rejected. A bidder may bid for one or more Items

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting **July 11 to July 25, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **PhP 500.00** in cash to the DepED Cashier

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no. 636-65-42

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties

(Sgd.) ATTY. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI July 11 & 18, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION
Region 13-CARAGA, Bancasi, Butuan City

INVITATION TO FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Date July 3, 2006
Loan No. 1668-PH Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project

Contract No	SPISP-LCB-GLB-01,	Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 0+580 - 4+400) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 1
	SPISP-LCB-GLB-02,	Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 4+400 - 8+860) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 2

(Local Competitive Bidding)

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project (SPISP) and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract for which this invitation for Prequalification is issued.
2. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) intends to prequalify firms for the Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal and Appurtenant Structures based on the above mentioned separate contract packages
3. The Gibong Left Bank is located in the Municipalities of Prosperidad and San Francisco, all of Agusan del Sur approximately 78 km south of Butuan City. Package 1 involves the improvement / rehabilitation of existing 3.82 km Left Main Canal including 15 units irrigation structures. Package 2 involves the improvement / rehabilitation of existing 4.48 km Left Main Canal including 15 units irrigation structures. The scopes of contract per package are expected to be as follows

	Work Items	Estimated Quantity Package 1	Estimated Quantity Package 2
a.	Canal Excavation, cu.m.	2,660	2,920
b.	Canal Embankment Fill, cu.m.	2,300	1,800
c.	Concrete Works with RSB, cu.m.	100	60
d.	Concrete Canal Lining, cu.m.	1,540	1,900

4. It is expected that notices of prequalification will be made in August 2006
5. Interested eligible applicants may obtain further information from the NIA-Region 13-CARAGA and inspect the Prequalification Document at the address given below during workdays from 0800 Hours to 1700 Hours, Philippine Standard Time
6. The Prequalification Forms, in English language, may be purchased by an interested Applicant upon submission of Letter of Intent clearly stating "Application for Prequalification for Contract No.
   a. SPISP-LCB-GLB-01, Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 0+580 - 4+400) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 1"
   b. SPISP-LCB-GLB-02, Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 4+400 - 8+860) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 2"

and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00 per Contract Package not later than 1700 Hours, Philippine Standard Time on July 21, 2006. The Letter of Intent shall be addressed as follows

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
c/o ENG'R RAFAEL A. ALAS, JR
Brgy. Bancasi, Butuan City, PHILIPPINES
Telephone No. 085-342-3000
Facsimile No. 085-342-5353
Electronic Mail Address: niacaraga@skynet.net

7. Submission of Applications for Prequalification, consisting of one (1) original and three (3) copies, must be received in sealed envelopes either delivered by hand or by registered mail to the above address on or before August 4, 2006, 1700 Hours Philippine Standard Time. The envelopes must be clearly marked "Application for Prequalification for Contract No.
   a. SPISP-LCB-GLB-01, Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 0+580 - 4+400) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 1"
   b. SPISP-LCB-GLB-02, Improvement / Rehabilitation of Existing Gibong Left Bank Main Canal (Sta. 4+400 - 8+860) and Appurtenant Structures - Package 2"
8. The NIA reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
9. The NIA will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Applicants in connection with the preparation or delivery of their Applications.
10. The NIA will notify all Applicants in writing of results of evaluation of their applications for prequalification

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAFAEL A. ALAS, JR.
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) DEMOCRATICO P. GRANA, JR., CESO V
Regional Irrigation Manager

(PDI-July 3 & 11, 2006)

ONLINE

www.henrybutcher.com

On the instruction of Premiere Printing Co., Inc.

ONLINE AUCTION SALE

High Quality Printing Equipment

Sale Closing: Thursday, 13th July 2006 at 20:00CCT (local time)

At: Premiere Printing Co., Inc. - #18, 1st Avenue,
Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.M.
Inspection: Monday 3rd - Thursday 13th July 2006
from 9am to 5pm or earlier by appointment

PRINTING - HEIDELBERG Speedmaster SM74-H (2000), HEIDELBERG MOV CP Tronic (1995) Reconditioned by HEIDELBERG (2006), (2) HEIDELBERG SM102 VCP Tronic (1989/1990) Four Color Printers, HEIDELBERG Speedmaster SM102 VCP Tronic Five Color Printer; HEIDELBERG SORS Single Color Printer (1984); HEIDELBERG KORD Single Color Printer (1986) (converted to UV Drying); HEIDELBERG Single Color Offset Printer (converted to Die Cutter)
FOLDING - STAHL 4 Fold Comprising: -FD56 142, TD 66 ¼, TD 78 ¼ Folding Machine (2000); STAHL K6614 KTL-F/B 3 Fold; SHOEI 2 Fold Folding Machine; Taiwan Folder Gluer
CUTTING - POLAR 115EM; (2) CHUNG TA SNL 115 CNC Paper Guillotines (1996), SHUNG FA Automatic Flaten Die Cut Machine (2001); TANG YUN TY 200 Electronic Hole Punch System, Manual Board Cutting Machine
BINDING/STITCHING - MULLER-MARTINI Type 1509 6 Station Saddle Stitcher (1990), MULLER-MARTINI Pony 5 Type 246 Perfect Binder; YOSHINO 16 Station Binding Line c/w Gathering, Perfect Binding, 3 Knife Trimmer
FILM PROCESSING - DAINIPPON-SCREEN Companica 680C Camera; NORSCREEN MS25-S-N289 (2002); NORSCREEN MS25S Film Processors; (2) HEXMAN Plate Makers
MISCELLANEOUS - GRETAG D19C 47B/P Reflection Densitometer; TECHKON T120 Densitometer

ONLINE AUCTION SALE

Telephone Card Pin Coding & Packaging Machinery

Sale Closing: Thursday, 13th July 2006 at 20:00CCT (local time)

At: Premiere Printing Co., Inc. - #18, 1st Avenue,
Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.M.
Inspection: Monday 3rd - Thursday 13th July 2006
from 9am to 5pm or earlier by appointment

METRONIC UDA 150S Type MT 471705-5013 Pin Coding Machine (2002);
KORA PACKMAT VMC 100 Card Packing Machine (2002)

For further information please contact Chris Major at
Tel: 852 2910 / 11 Email: chris.major@henrybutcher.com

GoIndustry
Henry Butcher

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILS. INC.
Rm. 102 Jollianl Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City
Tel No.: 852 2910/11 or 854 4917-18 Fax No.: 831 9507
E-mail:manila@henrybutcher.com

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-INFRASTRUCTURE

Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites specialty works contractors to apply for eligibility, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	Installation of Standby Generator Set for the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC)
Location	:	North Reclamation Area, Mandaue City
Brief Description	:	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Emergency Back up Power System for the CICC
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	P 19,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should possess a valid licenses/permits/certifications applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC for the last two years, and have key personnel, tools and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statements and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of BAC-INFRA activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	July 5 - 11, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	July 5 - 11, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	July 11, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	July 12, 2006
5. Issuance of Bidding Documents	July 13, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	July 14, 2006
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	July 26, 2006

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of non-refundable amount of Fifty Pesos (P 50.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 255-6123.

The BAC-INFRA will issue Bidding Documents including Technical Plans, Technical Specifications, Terms of Reference only to bidders declared to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P 5,000.00) to the Cash Division, Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect or informality in the bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman

July 11, 2006
Posted at the PGSO, Capitol Bldg.,
Prov'l Information Office & at
www.cebu.gov.ph

(PDI--July 11, 2006)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-INFRASTRUCTURE

Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites specialty works contractors to apply for eligibility, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	Installation of Elevators & Escalators for the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC)
Location	:	North Reclamation Area, Mandaue City
Brief Description	:	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Elevators & Escalators
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	P 13,000,000.00

Prospective bidders should possess a valid licenses/permits/certifications applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC for the last two years, and have key personnel, tools and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

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(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman

July 11, 2006
Posted at the PGSO, Capitol Bldg.,
Prov'l Information Office & at
www.cebu.gov.ph

(PDI--July 11, 2006)

The John Bosco HS reunion in Cebu

The John Bosco High School Batch '76 of Mangagoy, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, will be having a reunion on **July 28-30** at the **Cebu White Sands Resort**.

Reminisce the past and expect a lot of fun and activities as the '76 batch will be having games, raffles, photo presentation, city tour, and a mass celebration.

For details, call **Leo Montenegro (09163423417) Bebing Estrella-Laput (09182349817) Ping de la Cruz (09172025308), Luz de Guzman-Villanueva (09178865260), Babes Good (09189074817), Bessie Good (09195163281) and Ben Maata (09189141451).**

Please confirm attendance on or before July 15, 2006.

Send your resumé instantly.

JOB Market

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"SACRIFICE SALE!"

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

EQUIPMENT	BRAND	MODEL	CAPACITY	REMARK
MOTOR GRADER	MITSUBISHI	MG-3	3.6M	
WHEEL EXCAVATOR (Backhoe) with JACK HAMMER	SAMSUNG	MX6W-2	0.5 CU.M.	
VIB' ROLLER (Compactors)	KOMATSU	JV32W-1A	3 T	
DUMP TRUCK	ISUZU	10PB1	15 TON	
BULLDOZER	CAT	D4G		
EXCAVATOR (Backhoe)	DAEWOO	SOLAR220	1.0 CU.M.	
CONCRETE BATCHING PLANT	MARUTOMO		30 CU.M./HR	with Silo 1200 bags cap.
AIR COMPRESSOR				
WELDING GENERATORS				
CONCRETE CUTTER WITH ENGINE	ROBIN ENGINE			

All items are being sold in "AS-IS, WHERE-IS" basis.
These above equipment are ready for inspection in Alcala, Pangasinan
Interested buyers may contact the following numbers: 0920-200-8147, 0918-943-3735, 0918-515-6050

PNOC

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Makati City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Gas Chromatograph under FGM 60311
Approved Budget: PHP 3,496,300.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o Mr. Anthony E. Ciriaco starting July 4, 2006, and upon payments of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on July 13, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at the above address

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock time) of July 27, 2006. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--July 4 & 11, 2006)

More CLASSIFIED ADS

DepED,
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Riviera Golf Club B4

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JEWELRY
DIAMONDS
BEST OFFER
IN TOWN
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OBITUARIES

CELESTINO "BOY" TRONO III

Feb. 20, 1956 – July 7, 2006

peacefully joined our Creator
at the age of 50.

His loving daughters,
Anazelle
Grazelle
Keana

His brothers & sisters, in-laws, nephews & nieces, other relatives & friends request to pray for his eternal peace.

His remains lie in state at
Trono's residence, 15C Trono St.,
San Joaquin, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Thursday,
July 13, 2006 at Pasig Catholic Cemetery,
after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Immaculate
Conception Cathedral, Pasig City.

GOD HAS CALLED HOME OUR BELOVED MOMMY

PAZ NARCISO PULIDO

(June 22, 1916 – July 7, 2006)

Her bereaved husband: (†)**Reynaldo**; children: **Olivia**, (†)**Rene & Linda**, **Rico & Nini**, **Deo & Ophel**; grandchildren: **Eugene & Sharmain**, **Teresa**, **Rafael**, **Manny**, **Dexter**, **Arlene**, **Ronald**; greatgrandson: **Cedric Ivan**, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at **Marian Memorial Chapels**.

Interment will be on July 12, 2006, 9:00 A.M. at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Rosario (Chari) Cabrera vda. de Araullo

Loving wife of **Gervasio (Chito) A. Araullo** (†), peacefully joined the Lord on July 02, 2006 at the age of 88 after receiving the Last Sacraments in Chula Vista, California, USA.

The former Public Relations Officer of Sampaguita Pictures, Inc., VP Enterprises and Folk Arts Theater of the Philippines, **Chari** is survived by her children: **Ma. Cristina** and **Richard A. Falcon**, **Antonio** and **Mary Fernandez**, **Ma. Marta** and **Dan Sadol**, **Rene Luis** and **Evelyn Crucillo**, **Miguel Angel** and **Evelyn Flores**; grandchildren: **Georgina** and **Jean Paul**, **Janina**, **Rachel Ann**, and **Allison**, **Ramir Angelo**, **Ana Rebecca**, and **Ana Rowena**, **Ron Reuben**, **Michael Anthony** and **Ma. Regina**; siblings: **Juan A. Cabrera**, **Margarita C. Bataclan**, and **Milagros C. Araneta**; brothers- and sisters-in-law; great grandchildren; other relatives and friends, who request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

A memorial service and cremation was held in Chula Vista on Saturday, July 08, 2006. Interment of her ashes in the San Agustin Church Catacombs in Intramuros, Manila will be announced at a later date.

INOCENCIA "Niña" CATALUÑA LEAGOGO

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on July 9, 2006 at the age of 87.

She is preceded in death by her loving husband **Col. Liberato L. Leagogo** (†). Her children **Atty. Joey**, **Mafelou**, **Dr. Butch**, **Bong**; in-laws **Justice Celia**, **Joeboy**, **Lebby**, **Wilma**; grandchildren **Atty. Jojo**, **Rian**, **Pia** and **Izza** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the St. Therese Memorial Chapels, Molo, Iloilo from July 10-11. Her remains will be brought to her residence in Lapaz on July 12. Interment will be on July 13, 2006 after the 8:00 AM Mass at Lapaz Parish Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Manila : 711-6931 to 35

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
BLAS, SZE TAK LUI	Chapel A-2, Q.C.	07/12/2006, 1:00 p.m.	Manila Memorial Park, Sta. Rita, Bulacan
BONIFACIO TORINO	Chapel C-14, Q.C	7/12/2006, 9:00 a.m	Ever Memorial Crematory

---

SAFELY HOME

I am home in Heaven, dear ones; Oh, so happy and so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty, In this everlasting light;
All the pain and grief is over, Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever, Safely Home, in Heaven at last.

Our Dearly Beloved Dad

FILEMON YU UY

Dec. 04, 1940 – July 08, 2006

Went Home safely back to our Lord in the company, of the Blessed Virgin Mother, the Angels and Saints on July 8, 2006 at the age of 65.

We, his children, JASMINE & TONY; JEROME & FELISA; GRACE ANN & MANUEL and GILBERT & JEAN SANDRA, his grandchildren, relatives and friends request the readers to join us in prayers for our father's eternal happiness in Heaven.

He is now at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., Love Chapel, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City

He will be brought to his final resting place on July 12, 2006, Wednesday; leaving Arlington at 9:00 o'clock in the morning going to Ever Memorial Park, Valenzuela

"May God bless you all for your kind prayers."

RP franchising business seen to grow drastically over next 10 years

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE LOCAL FRANCHISING BUSINESS IS expected to grow dramatically over the next decade, despite already having made significant progress in recent years, according to the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA).

The umbrella organization of the country's largest franchise businesses also predicted that the bulk of the growth will come from sunrise service industries rather than the food business, which it described to be already "maturing."

"The opportunities are definitely there," PFA chairman emeritus Samie Lim said in a press briefing. "People ask me, 'is it too late to get into franchising?' The answer is 'no' because we still have a lot of room for growth."

He predicted that franchised businesses will comprise up to 40 percent of all retail establishments in the country in the next 10 years, approximating the number of franchise outlets in the US.

"In the US, almost every other store is a franchise," Lim said. "We have that potential because Filipinos are leaders in franchising."

Franchising involves the "selling" or "renting out" of a business' concept and brand to a third party, which will then operate the outlet in accordance with guidelines set by the original owners.

The franchisees' risks are reduced by riding on an established brand or product, while the franchisors' revenues are multiplied through the royalties paid to them.

While encouraging more entrepreneurs to venture into franchising, Lim however warned would-be investors against readily parting with their money to invest in schemes that promise franchise businesses in return for a P10,000 "reservation fee."

"We have received a lot of complaints from people about these activities," he said, adding that many of the people who fell prey to this scheme were those who invested their life savings.

He urged aspiring franchise entrepreneurs to seek the advice of PFA professionals, many of whom will be available for assistance during the organization's Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo from July 13-16 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

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	30 days	60 days	90 days	1 year
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10,000 - 49,999	2.8750	2.9375	3.0000	3.7500
50,000 - 99,999	3.1875	3.2500	3.3125	3.8750
100,000 - 249,999	3.3750	3.4375	3.5000	3.8750
250,000 - 499,999	3.4375	3.5000	3.5625	4.0000
500,000 - 999,999	3.6250	3.6875	3.7500	4.0000
1 million and up	3.7500	3.8125	3.8750	4.1250

Quoted rates may change without prior notice. Rates for other terms are also available

PBCOM Philippine Bank of Communications

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Oil tariff goes back up to 3%

Drop in Dubai crude leads to hike in import duties

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC managers have thumbed down a Department of Energy proposal to bring down the "trigger points" that would have led to the reduction of tariffs on crude and refined petroleum product imports.

This decision, said DOE oil industry management bureau director Zenaida Monsada, prompted oil firms to again raise diesel prices yesterday, after holding off on hiking the price of the socially sensitive product by almost a month.

"The decision of the economic managers is to maintain the trigger points," Monsada said in a telephone interview yesterday. "If the trigger points were reduced, then the tariff shouldn't have gone back up to 3 percent this month."

The tariffs on crude and finished product imports went down to 2 percent last month, when world oil prices hit the trigger points set by the implementing rules of EO 527.

Under those implementing rules, the existing 3-percent tariff will go down to 2 percent when the regional benchmark Dubai crude hits $66 a barrel, and when diesel—based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products—reaches $88 a barrel.

These price levels should have been sustained for the past two weeks to merit a tariff reduction.

The next trigger points, which will bring the tariff down to 1 percent, are $75 a barrel for Dubai crude and still $88 a barrel for MOPS-based diesel.

The import tariff will be scrapped altogether when Dubai crude hits $85 a barrel, and MOPS-based diesel reaches $88 a barrel.

According to data from the DOE, the June average for Dubai crude hit only $65.22 a barrel. The last two weeks of June saw a steady incremental drop in Dubai crude price.

Also, the price of MOPS-based diesel reached a June average of $87.57 a barrel, despite registering a steady climb over the past two weeks.

Failing to meet the trigger points for a 2-percent tariff, officials again raised tariff levels to the mandated 3 percent.

The economic managers conducted a review of the trigger points, in search of ways to further mitigate the effects of high oil prices on consumers.

Monsada said in an earlier interview that, while they were open to the possibility of bringing down the trigger points, they did not want to do so at the expense of government revenue.

"The objective is to bring prices down while not necessarily draining government [coffers]," she said.

Deadline nears, yet brokers hang on to PSE stocks

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE DEADLINE FOR THE PHIlippine Stock Exchange (PSE) to reduce brokers' ownership of the local bourse to 20 percent will lapse this week, but still no trader appears to be willing to part with his stock.

Currently, stockbrokers own roughly 52 percent of the PSE.

The deadline was set by the Securities and Exchange Commission, yet its chair Fe Barin said that the regulator understands the difficulty the PSE is having in finding sellers at this time.

"While we have required that [the brokers] sell before or by July 15, we have to be realistic and practical," Barin told INQUIRER.

Barin however said that any move by the SEC will depend on the PSE when it files its formal report, apprising the regulator of its effort to reduce brokers' stake in the bourse.

Barin said the PSE has verbally told the SEC of the difficulty it was having, but it has yet to file a formal report.

The PSE earlier admitted it was having a tough time meeting the deadline set by the SEC to cut brokers' ownership to 20 percent by July as mandated by the Securities Regulation Code.

Under the code, an industry should not own more than 20 percent of the PSE. Also, an individual should not hold more than 5 percent of the bourse.

The SRC was enacted in 2000, following the BW Resources Corp. gaming stock scandal that rocked the country's trade institution.

It is unclear what will happen to the PSE if it is in breach of securities laws. PSE president Francis Lim earlier said it was up to the SEC to decide the matter.

Lim said that currently there is interest from foreign funds to buy shares of the PSE.

Brokers however are not willing to part with their shares for a low price.

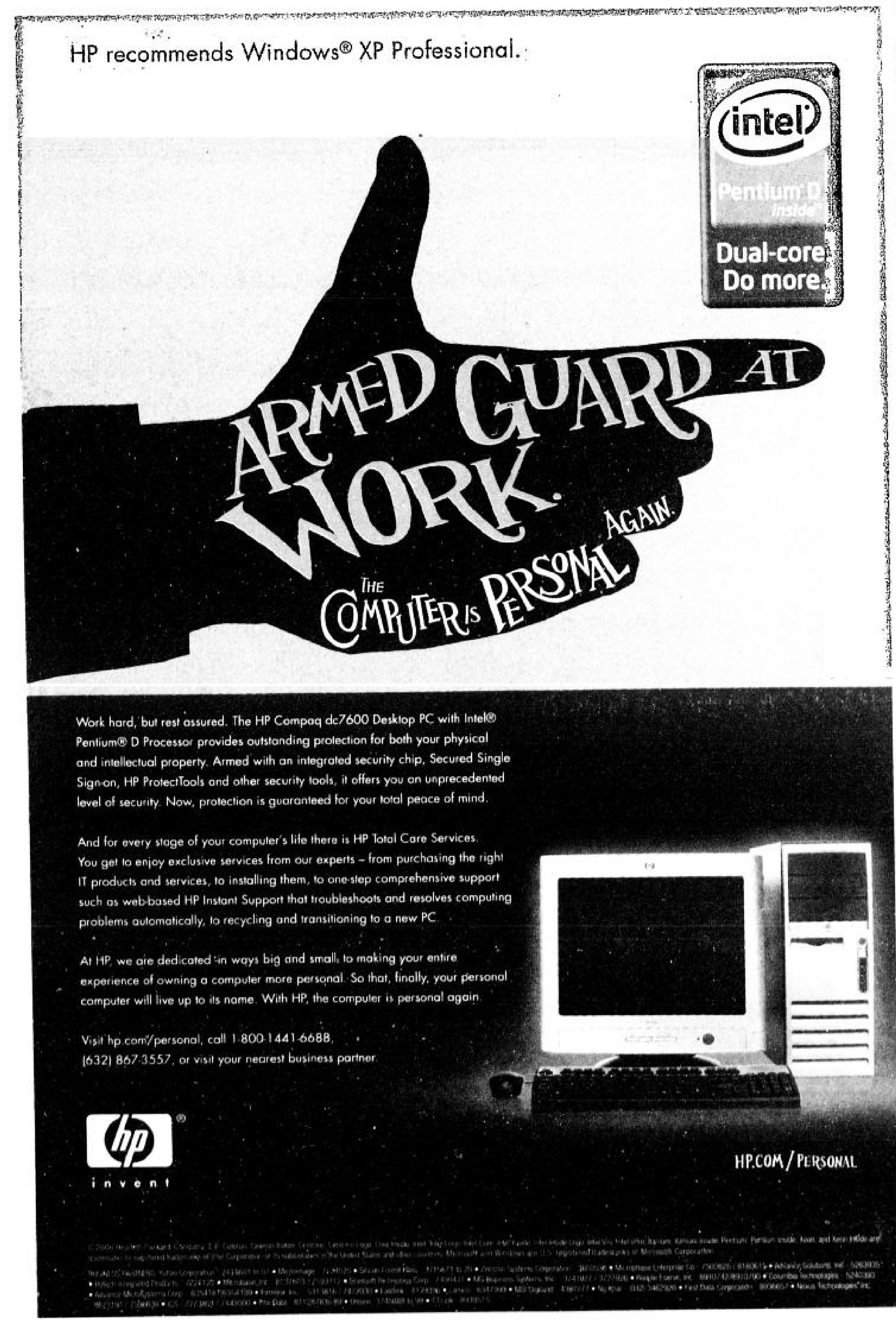
Recently, an offer from Hong Kong investment management firm Value Partners Ltd. to buy shares of the PSE drew a cool reaction from stockbrokers.

VPL has offered to buy up to five percent of PSE shares worth P155.4 million. The deal is seen to boost PSE's efforts to "demutualize" the bourse.

Demutualization will convert the stock exchange from a company controlled by stockbrokers to one widely owned by various stockholders.

So far, brokers, even those holding a paltry 88,000 shares, were willing to unload.

Sources estimated the PSE's indicative price was between P200 and P300 a share.



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BIR, BOC out to limit use of tax credit certificates

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue and the Bureau of Customs are set to issue regulations that will limit business owners' use of tax credit certificates (TCCs).

Finance Undersecretary Gaudencio Mendoza Jr. said the BIR and the BOC are expected by the end of the month to submit the regulations to the Department of Finance for approval.

Mendoza said that the regulations are expected to improve the government's control over TCCs issued to businesses, and curb abuses of the tax credit system.

"There is already an agreement between concerned agencies on limiting the use of TCCs," Mendoza said.

TCCs are issued by the government to firms that are either entitled to tax refunds or duty-free privileges.

Because the government's budget constraint sometimes prevent it from giving refunds as they are claimed, concerned agencies simply issue TCCs, which holders may use to lower their tax liabilities.

Currently, TCCs are transferable, meaning holders may sell it at a discount to another firm. The new holder may use the TCCs to lower its own tax obligations.

Mendoza said one possible limitation to be included in the BIR and BOC regulations had to do with the amount of TCCs that a firm may buy. The BIR is looking at allowing firms to buy TCCs in the amount not exceeding its tax liabilities, he said.

Another possible limitation is to allow holders of TCCs to use only 30 or 40 percent of the total value of the TCCs at any given tax period.

This would help prevent cases in the past when too many firms used their TCCs in one tax payment period, thus eroding the BIR's tax collection effort for that period.

The regulations to be issued would complement the Department of Finance's earlier directive to revalidate all existing TCCs. Under the revalidation, holders of TCCs will have to submit these to the issuing government agency for replacement. The new TCCs to be issued will have added security features.

The finance official said that there are about P5 billion worth of TCCs issued by the government that need to be revalidated.

LIFESTYLE

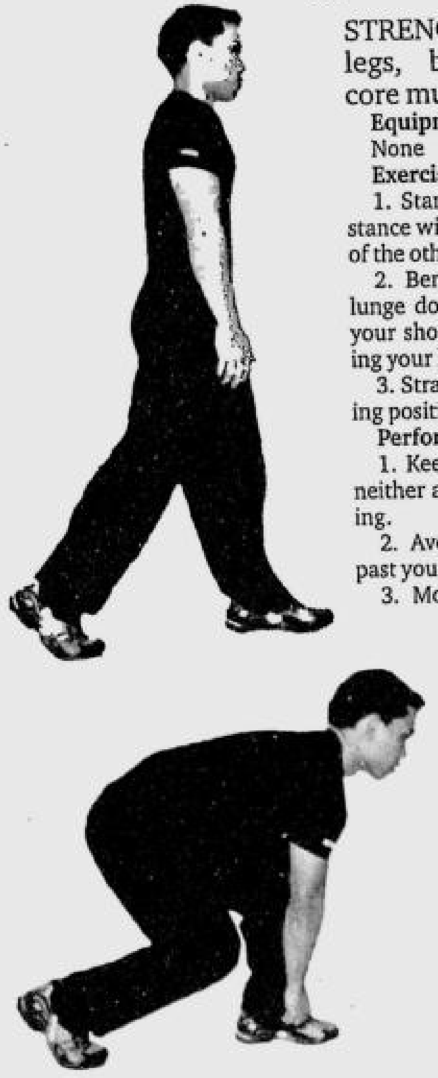
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◆ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◆ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◆ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◆ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Tie-your-shoelaces lunge



STRENGTHENS THE legs, buttocks and core muscles

Equipment

None

Exercise technique

1. Stand in a staggered stance with one leg in front of the other.
2. Bend your knees to lunge down and reach for your shoe as if you are tying your laces.
3. Straighten up to starting position.

Performance tips

1. Keep spine neutral—neither arching nor rounding.
2. Avoid bringing knee past your toes.
3. Modify this exercise by reaching a little past knee level instead of all the way down to the shoelaces.

Repetitions

Ten to 15 repetitions per leg

More on golf injury prevention

Part three: Lower back

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

GOLFERS HAVE BEEN known to blame their mattress, car seat, stress in the office, caddy, and even their mother-in-law—never golf—as the source of their back pain. But they can deny all they want, lower back aches and pains are common in golf.

There are many opportunities to hurt your back—while swinging the club, hunching forward to putt, and bending down to pick up or put down the ball. Repeat these movements many times in a game, multiply by several days in a week, add weak trunk muscles, mediocre flexibility, and aging vertebrae and disks and you have a recipe for back pain.

It doesn't help that the golf swing places a higher compressive load on the lower back (eight times body weight) than sports like running (three times) or rowing (seven times).

The disks that act as shock absorbers between the vertebra can get compressed by about 9 mm after nine holes, with most of the compression happening during the first three holes.

The golf swing is a complicated athletic move. Here are some bad body alignment techniques—pushing the hips backward then forward instead of rotating the hips, bending the spine during the swing, turning the shoulders much wider than the hips, and leaning over to avoid the arms colliding with a big tummy.

Amateur golfers are usually injured by poor swing mechanics while pros (who have developed a much more efficient swing) are usually hurt by overuse.

The first symptom of lower back problems is usually muscular pain. If ignored, the next symptom is pain from inflammation of the ligaments or disks of the spine or perhaps a pulled muscle. At this point, the golfer usually sees his doctor.

Classic vs modern

In the "classic" golf swing, the hips and shoulders turn together to produce a swing that is graceful and relatively gentle on the lower back. Unfortunately, this type of swing does not deliver as much "oomph" or distance. Enter the "modern" swing, which resembles an inverted-C in the follow-through. This produces more torque and more distance but a greater chance of injury.

When I tried to learn how to play golf more than 20 years ago, my golf pro told me, "Ma'am, whatever you do, don't copy the swing of your husband."

My better half has an unorthodox swing because a one-legged player taught him how to play. This is just as well since he has to compensate for an old knee injury from soccer. So it's as if he plays with one real and one prosthetic leg. His swing may be unconventional but he has not had lower back problems from golf in the 25 years that he has been playing.

Modify your swing to fit your anatomical peculiarities. You may not be able to get the ball as far as you want (anyway, distance isn't everything) but you will greatly reduce the risk to your back.

Prevention tips

Top golf fitness instructor Sean Cochran (www.bioforcegolf.com) gives three steps to reduce the risk of lower back injury. In his words:

- Develop efficient golf swing mechanics. This can be done through proper instruction, practice, and time.
- Implement a golf fitness program into your exercise routine. This type of program will strengthen your lower back in relation to the golf swing.
- Monitor the number of swings you make with the club in relation to points one and two.

Cochran adds: "A lower back injury can occur if the workloads for any golfer become too high. Workloads are the number of swings you take within a certain time frame.

"For example, if you were to go to the range and execute 1,000 swings of the golf club in a three-hour time frame, the likelihood of a lower back injury is very high because the workloads are too high within the given time frame for any golfer.

"If you have poor golf swing mechanics and a weak lower back, your workloads should be very low. If you have moderately efficient golf swing mechanics and a fairly strong lower back, the workloads can be higher."

Sources: Golf Injury Review, Sports Injury Bulletin; Harvard Men's Health Watch; Dr. Tan Jee Lim, Changi General Hospital, Singapore

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Health and wellness matter

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THE QUESTIONS YOU ASK MOST often are possibly the same nagging issues you may not have addressed through the years.

By not attending to them, they remain stored somewhere in your mind under the label "pending."

So, here are answers that hopefully will help you re-label your health and wellness issues under the title "resolved."

Q: What is the safest, most effective diet today?

A majority of people are plagued by the same problems—obesity, overweight concerns. Confused by all the diet plans available, they end up trying all or improvising.

Harry, a driven businessman who hardly had time to relax and enjoy a meal, would snack on coffee or literally starve himself. At mealtime, he refused carbohydrates totally, misled by his own beliefs that carbo would make him gain weight. Thus, he remained slim and trim but often had headaches and dizzy spells. Soon, he developed ulcers.

Whatever diet plan you have now, it should be supervised by a nutritionist/dietitian. However, the best regimen of all is to eat in moderation—a little bit of everything. The emphasis, of course, is on "little." Studies have shown that eating less is still an effective, safe way to control and/or lose weight.

There are, however, natural weight-loss habits like drinking two glasses of water before a meal preferably mixed with C-Lium fiber. A new all-natural product in the market today looks promising—Xando Block & Burn. It's a tablet that contains kidney bean extracts, chicory and garcinia.

Taken before a meal, it can block out calories from carbo, starch and sugar from some favorite foods like pasta, rice and bread. The combination of active ingredients like phaseolamin, insulin and hydroxy citric acid (HCA) reduces and burns body fat.

With no caffeine or laxative effect on the body, it is easy and hassle-free to use.

Call Perfectaire at 7279999 or 0922-88XANDO.

If endorsers Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino are on this program, expect them to be much slimmer in a few weeks.

Talk imaging

A mind technique that works is this: Every time you read the menu in a restaurant or stand in front of a buffet table, stop. Ask yourself: "Do I really need this food in my body?" Close your eyes and imagine yourself ballooning after devouring a particular food. You'll be amazed by the power of your own mind!

Q: Looking good is expensive and takes too much time and effort. Why should I care? And if I do, how do I begin?

Looking good has more to do with you than any cosmetic brand or vitamin pill. The choice is yours. Self-esteem is rooted in how an individual values herself/himself. Because good grooming is so connected with good feelings, the expression "look good,

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10-year	**11.50%**	**P10,665**

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A Temporary Closure

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A Lasting Promise

When we open our new door again, you will enjoy the same
fine dining experience in the tradition of
Maxim's Group of Restaurants Hongkong. Plus so much more.
Our authentic Cantonese cuisine which you have enjoyed
for 25 years will still be served, but with new additions
and more modern amenities.

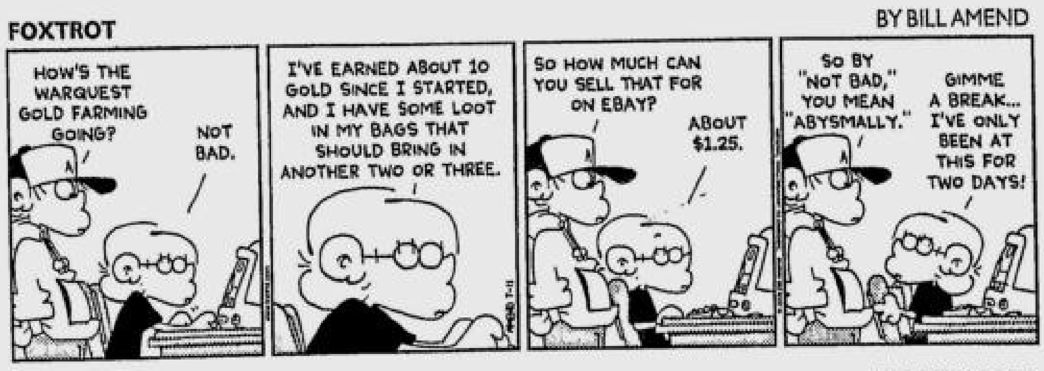
Meanwhile, we invite you to visit Peking Garden, our sister
restaurant in Glorietta - 2, Ayala Center where your favorite
dishes at Jade Garden will also be served.

翠園酒家

JADE GARDEN
Fine Chinese Cuisine
(For reservation, you may call Peking Garden at 817-9066 to 67)

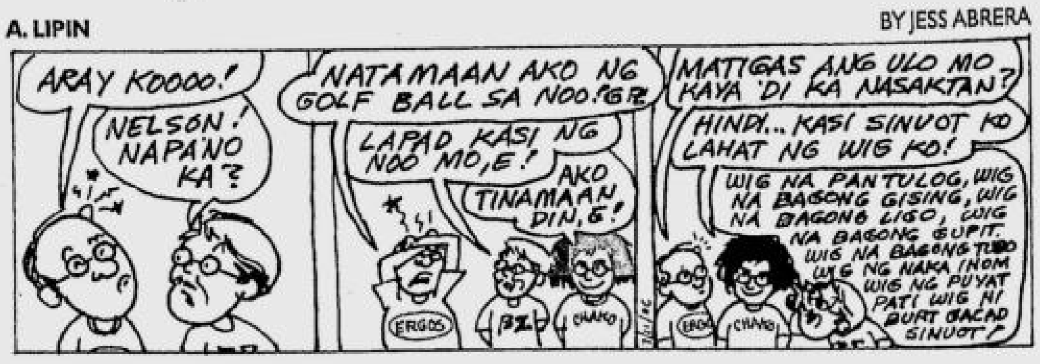
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HOW'S THE WARQUEST GOLD FARMING GOING?
NOT BAD.
I'VE EARNED ABOUT 10 GOLD SINCE I STARTED, AND I HAVE SOME LOOT IN MY BAGS THAT SHOULD BRING IN ANOTHER TWO OR THREE.
SO HOW MUCH CAN YOU SELL THAT FOR ON EBAY?
ABOUT $1.25.
SO BY "NOT BAD," YOU MEAN "ABYSMALLY."
GIMME A BREAK... I'VE ONLY BEEN AT THIS FOR TWO DAYS!

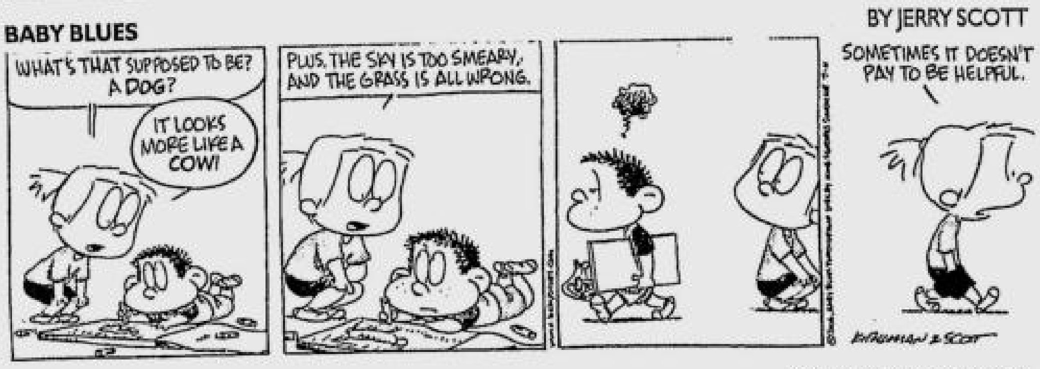
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ARAY KOOOO!
NELSON! NAPA'NO KA?
NATAMAAN AKO NG GOLF BALL SA NOO! GRR
LAPAD KASI NG NOO MO, E!
AKO TINAMAAN DIN, E!
MATIGAS ANG ULO MO KAYA 'DI KA NASAKTAN?
HINDI... KASI SINUOT KO LAHAT NG WIG KO!
WIG NA PANTULOG, WIG NA BAGONG GISING, WIG NA BAGONG LIGO, WIG NA BAGONG GUPIT. WIG NA BAGONG TUBO WIG NG NAKA INOM WIG NG PUYAT PATI WIG NI BURT BACAD SINUOT!
ERGOS
BZ
CHANG

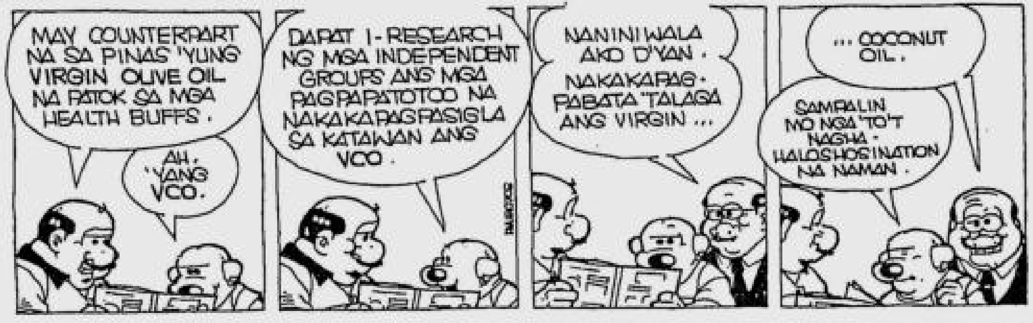
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO BE? A DOG?
IT LOOKS MORE LIKE A COW!
PLUS, THE SKY IS TOO SMEARY, AND THE GRASS IS ALL WRONG.
SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T PAY TO BE HELPFUL.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

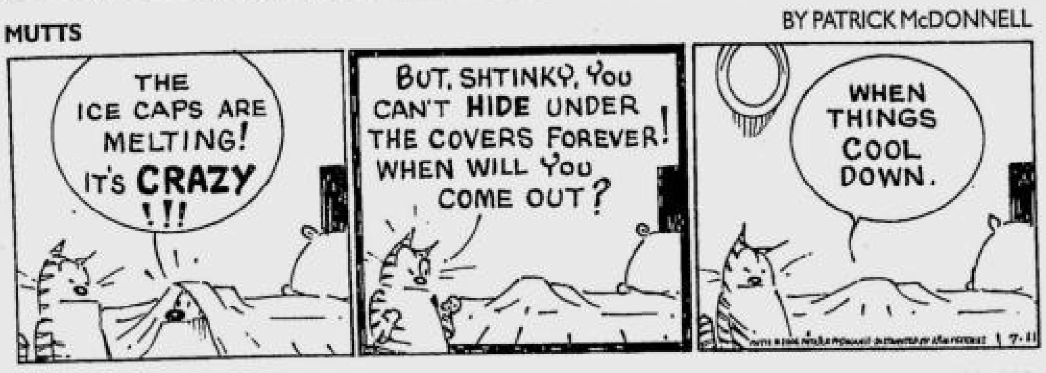
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY COUNTERPART NA SA PINAS 'YUNG VIRGIN OLIVE OIL NA PATOK SA MGA HEALTH BUFFS.
AH, 'YANG VCO.
DAPAT I-RESEARCH NG MGA INDEPENDENT GROUPS ANG MGA PAGPAPATOTOO NA NAKAKAPAGPASIGLA SA KATAWAN ANG VCO.
NANINIWALA AKO D'YAN. NAKAKAPAG-PABATA TALAGA ANG VIRGIN ...
... COCONUT OIL.
SAMPALIN MO NGA 'TO'T NAGHA-HALOSHOSINATION NA NAMAN.

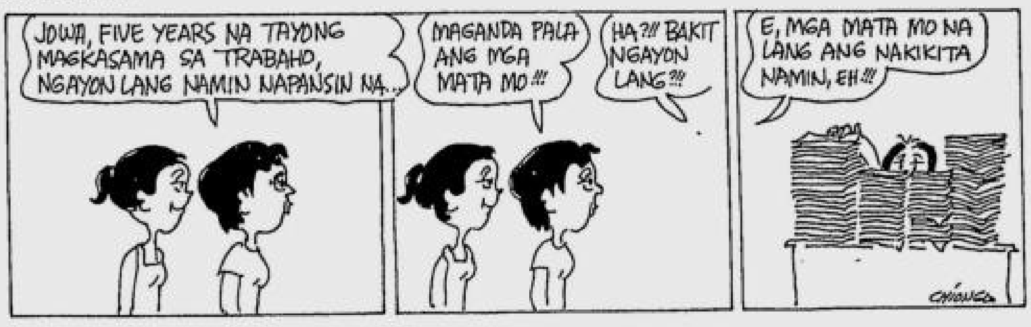
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THE ICE CAPS ARE MELTING! IT'S CRAZY !!!
BUT, SHTINKY, YOU CAN'T HIDE UNDER THE COVERS FOREVER! WHEN WILL YOU COME OUT?
WHEN THINGS COOL DOWN.
7-11

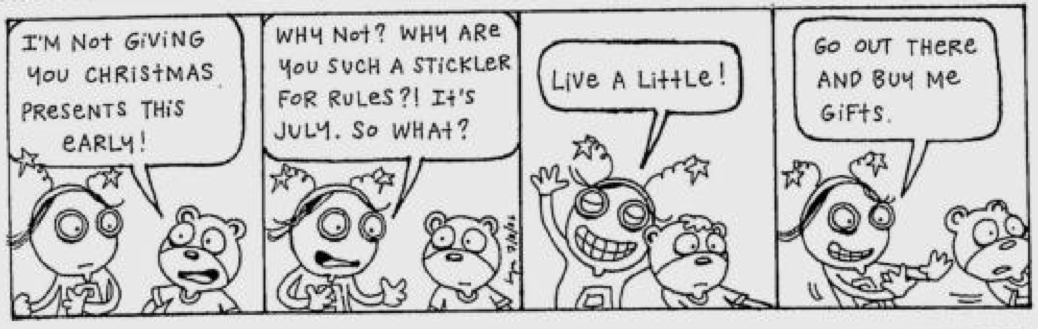
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, FIVE YEARS NA TAYONG MAGKASAMA SA TRABAHO, NGAYON LANG NAMIN NAPANSIN NA...
MAGANDA PALA ANG MGA MATA MO!!!
HA?!! BAKIT NGAYON LANG?!!
E, MGA MATA MO NA LANG ANG NAKIKITA NAMIN, EH!!!
CHIONGLO

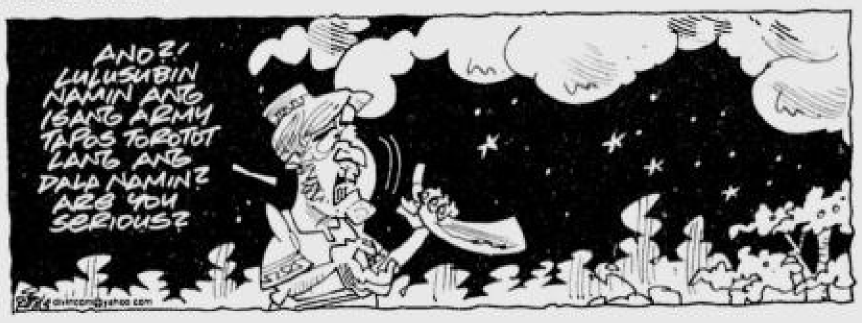
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M NOT GIVING YOU CHRISTMAS PRESENTS THIS EARLY!
WHY NOT? WHY ARE YOU SUCH A STICKLER FOR RULES?! IT'S JULY. SO WHAT?
LIVE A LITTLE!
GO OUT THERE AND BUY ME GIFTS.

DIVINE COMEDY

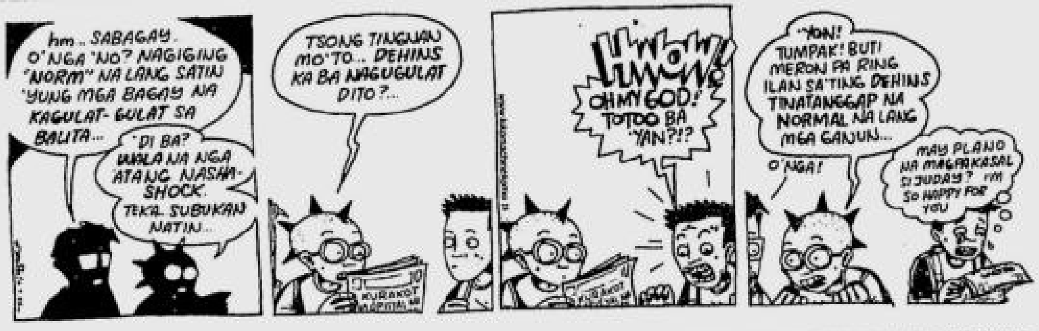
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANO?! LULUSUBIN NAMIN ANG ISANG ARMY TAPOS TOROTOT LANG ANG DALA NAMIN? ARE YOU SERIOUS?

AT HINDI TALAGA LUBOS MAISIP NI GIDEON ANG UTOS NA BINIGAY SA KANYA NG DIYOS

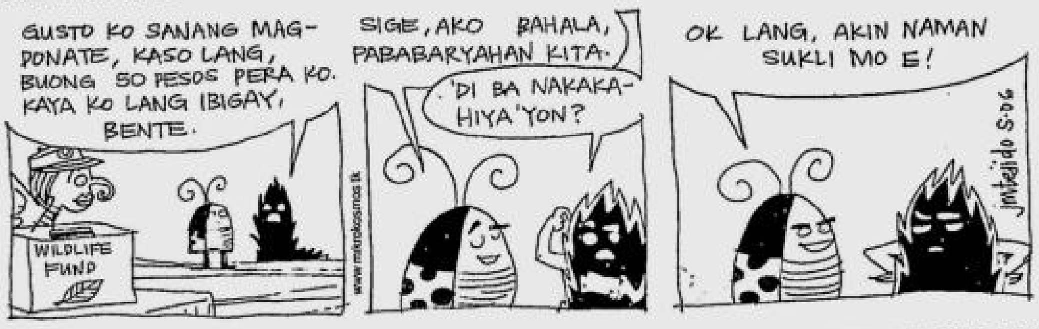
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hm.. SABAGAY. O'NGA 'NO? NAGIGING "NORM" NA LANG SATIN 'YUNG MGA BAGAY NA KAGULAT-GULAT SA BALITA...
'DI BA? WALA NA NGA ATANG NASHA-SHOCK. TEKA. SUBUKAN NATIN...
TSONG TINGNAN MO 'TO... DEHINS KA BA NAGUGULAT DITO?...
WOW! OH MY GOD! TOTOO BA 'YAN?!?
'YAN! TUMPAK! BUTI MERON PA RING ILAN SA'TING DEHINS TINATANGGAP NA NORMAL NA LANG MGA GANUN...
O'NGA!
MAY PLANO NA MAGPAKASAL SI JUDAY? I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU
KURAKOT KAPITAL

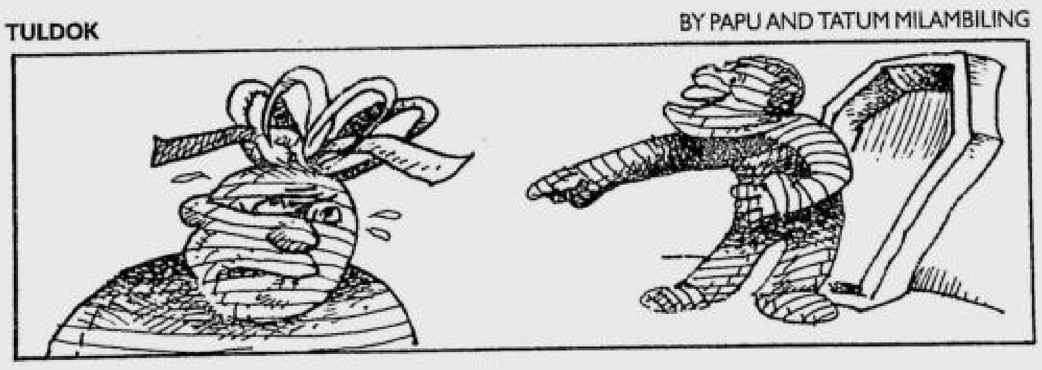
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GUSTO KO SANANG MAG-DONATE, KASO LANG, BUONG 50 PESOS PERA KO. KAYA KO LANG IBIGAY, BENTE.
WILDLIFE FUND
SIGE, AKO BAHALA, PABABARYAHAN KITA.
'DI BA NAKAKA-HIYA 'YON?
OK LANG, AKIN NAMAN SUKLI MO E!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
jmtejido 5.06

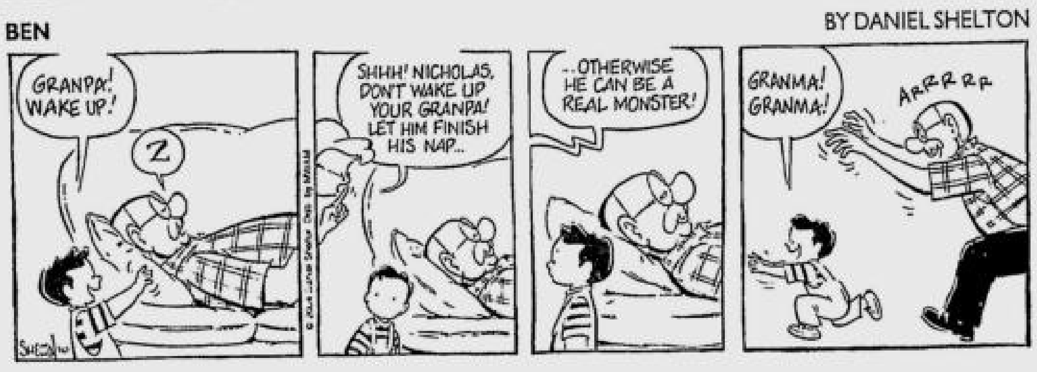
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GRANPA! WAKE UP!
Z
SHHH! NICHOLAS, DON'T WAKE UP YOUR GRANPA! LET HIM FINISH HIS NAP...
...OTHERWISE HE CAN BE A REAL MONSTER!
GRANMA! GRANMA!
ARRRRR

DAILY CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14					■	15				■	16			
17					18					■	19			
■	■	■	20					■	21	22				
23	24	25	■	26				27			■	28		
29			30			■	■	31			32		■	■
33					■	34	35			■	36		37	38
39				■	40					■	41			
42				■	43				■	44				
■	■	45		46			■	■	47					
48	49		■	50			51	52			■	53		
54			55			■	56				57	■	■	■
58				■	59	60						61	62	63
64				■	65				■	66				
67				■	68				■	69				

By Alex Kochergin
Sunnyvale, CA

7/11/06

ACROSS
1 Wild stab
6 Pod pals
10 Front of the calf
14 Honshu metropolis
15 Bullets, informally
16 Story
17 Magazine
19 Orchestral reed
20 Tool for evening
21 Count (on)
23 Natl. TV network
26 Speaker
28 Sunbeam
29 Bradley U. city
31 Mountain nymph
33 Tennis champ Monica
34 Earring setting
36 Summoned, old-style
39 God of love
40 Make repairs at Shea
41 Hebrew zither
42 "Auld Lang ___"
43 Bridge position
44 Unstressed vowel
45 Olympian Jesse
47 Cake makers
48 ___ Gatos, CA
50 Grain alcohol
53 Kind of bread
54 Deep secrets
56 ___ Antoinette
58 Hoof noise
59 Confiscate
64 Small shark
65 Winglike parts
66 Be of one mind
67 Cameo gem
68 Tear apart
69 Roebuck's partner

DOWN
1 Letters for Republicans
2 Bring into play
3 Corn serving
4 Quick hop
5 Brazilian city near Belem
6 House coat?
7 Roast host
8 Doctor's org.
9 Mended with melted metal
10 Halt
11 Dealer in men's furnishings
12 Entertainer Massey
13 In want
18 Facts
22 Afore
23 Church sections
24 Noah or Wallace
25 Intestinal exam
27 Mechanical man
30 Stitch anew
32 One way to be taken?
34 Dog tether
35 C.I.A. forerunner
37 Wedding present?
38 Wipe from memory
40 Temporary auto
44 John Steinbeck's birthplace
46 Poetic twilight
47 Half a Polynesian island?
48 Milk: pref.
49 Synthetic fiber
51 Jordan's capital
52 Identified
55 Peak
57 Rim
60 Granada bravo
61 Period
62 Auction end?
63 Legal matter

Monday's Puzzle Solved

A	B	Y	S	S	■	S	P	A	R	■	R	E	F	S
S	L	E	E	P	■	H	I	R	E	■	A	L	O	E
O	U	T	T	O	L	U	N	C	H	■	B	L	U	E
F	R	I	■	N	I	N	E	■	E	M	B	A	R	K
■	■	■	I	D	E	S	■	S	A	R	I	■	■	■
S	C	O	N	E	S	■	H	E	R	I	T	A	G	E
C	H	U	T	E	■	H	O	E	S	■	P	L	E	A
O	A	T	H	■	F	E	M	M	E	■	U	F	O	S
T	R	E	E	■	I	R	E	S	■	S	N	I	D	E
S	O	R	C	E	R	E	R	■	E	M	C	E	E	S
■	■	■	R	O	E	S	■	P	T	A	H	■	■	■
C	A	R	U	S	O	■	M	A	N	S	■	S	A	W
R	U	I	N	■	P	L	A	Y	A	H	U	N	C	H
E	R	I	C	■	A	I	N	T	■	U	S	U	R	Y
W	A	S	H	■	L	V	O	V	■	P	A	G	E	S

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7/11/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have excellent social skills. You're knowledgeable, informed, and you like people. You also like to keep abreast of things. Because of your broad interests and levels of social activity, your privacy is important to you. You're complex. Few really know you. This year might be one of the best years of your life. Dream big!
Birthdate of: Leon Spinks, boxer; Sela Ward, actress; Giorgio Armani, designer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Try to get better organized at home today. Family discussions are significant. Relatives or friends might help you make repairs that are overdue.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Pay your phone bill. Stay on top of car repairs. Transportation and communication delays will dog your steps for the next few weeks. Be extra-clear in all your communications with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be very clear in all your financial dealings. Old business is back in your lap again. This includes opportunities to earn money. Perhaps it's a second chance?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Both the Sun and retrograde Mercury are in your sign now. This definitely draws old acquaintances and partners out of the woodwork. (Look your best at all times.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Lots of old business from your past is back in your life again. Acquaintances you haven't seen for a while, plus unfinished business, give you a lot to think about.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Friends you haven't seen for a while and acquaintances from clubs and organizations might contact you. This is an opportunity to renew past histories with others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're in the limelight because the Sun is high in your chart. Bosses and VIPs notice you. Since you never get a second chance to make a first impression, make the most of this!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Delays in travel plans as well as matters connected with publishing and the media are likely. Cope as best you can. (Everyone feels these delays.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have a chance to renegotiate something having to do with shared property or how you handle certain responsibilities for others. Don't agree to anything you don't want to do.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Ex-partners are back in your life. Handle this with grace and style. You have to redefine your relationships. (Even if the relationship means you never speak.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Quite a few old issues from your past are back in your life again. Consider this an opportunity to bring things to a close or finish them for good.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Old flames come to mind. You might run into ex-lovers, or just hear about them or remember them for some reason. This could help you figure out what you really want.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

9			3	8	7			6
		6				7		
	1						3	
		5	4		3	8		
				1				
		9	2		8	5		
	3						7	
		2				6		
8			5	6	1			9

Difficulty Level ★★

7/11

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	6	7	8	1	3	4	9	5
3	8	4	9	7	5	2	6	1
1	5	9	6	4	2	8	7	3
6	9	3	1	8	7	5	2	4
5	4	8	2	3	9	6	1	7
7	2	1	4	5	6	3	8	9
8	1	2	3	9	4	7	5	6
4	7	6	5	2	1	9	3	8
9	3	5	7	6	8	1	4	2

Difficulty Level ★

Thinking with the whole brain

Part 2

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

AT FIRST, PEOPLE THOUGHT THEY HAD only one brain. Then Dr. Roger Sperry demonstrated that we had, in effect, two brains, the left and the right.

Dr. Paul MacLean of the California Institute of Technology proposed the Triune-Brain (or three-in-one) theory of the brain.

According to Dr. MacLean, the human brain evolved millions of years ago in three distinct stages. The first to appear or develop was the reptilian brain composed of the brain stem, the mid-brain and the basal ganglia.

This primitive brain's function was simply to recoil and attack. It recognized habit patterns and territorial integrity. As long as its territory was not touched or crossed, there's no problem: the reptilian brain would not react. But when it felt that its territory or habitat was threatened or endangered, it would attack or retaliate.

This is the brain we have in common with reptiles. Thus, the name "reptilian."

The next portion of the brain to develop over long periods of evolutionary process, was the mammalian brain or limbic system. It is the seat of emotions and controls the body's autonomic nervous system (breathing, heart beat, etc.) This is the brain we have in common with rats, dogs, horses and other mammals.

The last part of the brain to develop is the neo-cortex, which enables humans to think, especially in an abstract and rational way. The neo-cortex is divided into two hemispheres, the left and the right.

Civilized society

The emergence or development of the neocortex enabled humans to discover and develop language, science and technology. In other words, it gave birth to civilized society.

As if these new theories on how the brain works were not enough, along came Ned Herrmann, who proposed that we not only have one, or two or three brains, we have in effect four!

As head of General Electric's Management Training and Development Department, Herrmann was concerned about improving the way the company trained its staff and managers. He had to learn how people learned. He developed tests and, because of this, his efforts resulted in a novel way of looking at the brain.

He said a person thought in four different ways depending on which part of his brain was dominant or more preferred. He divided the brain into four theoretical quadrants, each representing a distinct pattern of thinking.

On the upper left quadrant, he said people thought "factually, logically, rationally, theoretically and mathematically." On the lower left quadrant, their thinking was "ordered, detailed, sequential, controlled and conservative."

On the upper right quadrant, they thought in an "artistic, holistic, intuitive, flexible, imaginative and synthesizing manner," and on the lower right quadrant, people thought in a "musical, spiritual, emotional and empathic manner."

Examples of upper-left brain thinkers are scientists, military officers and mathematicians. Lower-left brain thinkers are accountants, lawyers, statisticians. Upper-right brain thinkers are entrepreneurs, novelists, creative writers. Lower-right brain thinkers are entertainers, social workers, sales personnel, etc.

Preferred modes

These are styles or preferred modes of thinking. They are not fixed or unchangeable. They show which theoretical part of the brain our preferred thinking pattern uses.

People's thinking preference will gravitate toward any one or a combination of these quadrants. If you find yourself at home in all four quadrants or styles of thinking, then you are a whole-brain thinker. That means one quadrant is not more dominant or preferred than another.

This theoretical whole-brain model of thinking proposed by Ned Herrmann has gained much acceptance in business and industry abroad. Training programs have been developed to train executives for whole-brain thinking.

This brain skill is especially true as one goes up the organizational business ladder. The person at the top must think in a whole brain manner to survive competition.

We are now in the midst of a tremendous and often dizzying knowledge revolution. The only way to survive is to use our whole brain in problem solving and decision-making. Otherwise, we will most likely be left behind.

My next ESP and Intuition Development Seminar will be held 9 a.m.-5 p.m., July 15-16. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for details.

The person at the top must have this brain skill to survive competition

Once-a-month osteo medication

ARMING THE FILIPINO women with just a once-monthly dose against osteoporosis, Roche (Philippines) Inc. has introduced in the country the first and only once-a-month bisphosphonate, Ibandronic acid, a class of drug that helps strengthen all the bones in the body.

Roche introduced the new Ibandronic acid drug during the launch of BonDiva Women's Campaign for Bone Health, an exclusive patient program designed to help osteoporosis patients live life to the fullest.

The new medication, designed to make it easier and more convenient to treat osteoporosis, is expected to benefit some nine million Filipino women suffering from the so-called brittle bone disease.

The once-a-month regimen is also expected to enable these women to take their medication regularly, without fail.

Tests have shown the Ibandronic acid drug to be effective, well-tolerated and preferred by women.

Roche Ibandronic acid is indicated for the treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. It works by reducing elevated bone turnover, increasing bone mineral density and reducing the incidence of vertebral fractures.

Results from tests using the new medicine were presented by the Switzerland-based pharmaceutical company at the 33rd European Symposium on Calcified Tissues in Prague, Czech Republic and at the Sixth European Congress on Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis in Vienna, Austria.

Log on to www.bondiva.com.ph

GLORIA Diaz

Health and wellness matter

From page C1

feel good" was born.

You owe it to yourself to look good. Feeling good about yourself can only contribute to your well-being. Begin with a declaration of loyalty to yourself. Once done, a regimen that supports a healthy lifestyle will follow. Also, enroll in a gym that will design a complete program for you.

Q: Should I ignore mild but frequent pain and discomfort? I cannot find the time to see a doctor.

Always make time to see a doctor, at least twice yearly. Your body speaks to you in many ways—and one way to determine something is wrong is via pain. Men in general ignore these signs, remaining in denial about the state of their health because of fear or pride.

Q: How can I overcome my irritable mood?

Maybe you have an unbalanced diet. Certain Vitamin B deficiencies can lead to irritability. Biochemical cases are the culprit in case of mental disturbance. Make sure you are getting the right vitamin/mineral supplements. Find balance in your life. Do something worthwhile (if you are not a career person) with your life instead of just staying home and doing nothing.

Love & light!

Invitation to all at the "Celebrate Life with SM and Cory Quirino," a sunrise-to-sunset wellness event, Sunday, July 30, at Mall of Asia. Organizations interested in leading the sunrise run and sunset stroll are welcome to join. Call 3674494.

Stay cool, comfy and dry in high-tech fabric

DESPITE the demanding body movements, participants remained well composed and very confident.

MUST PEOPLE WORK OUT TO look good risk looking bad in sweaty clothes? For those who have finally discovered the newest line of Equipe sportswear, looking good and feeling comfortable at the same time is now possible.

The recent activities at Toby's Sports Arena challenged the comfort benefit and the stylish appeal of Equipe's newest line of sportswear. The boxing clinic and the street jazz dance clinic, both sponsored by Equipe, turned out to be well-attended events.

Featuring Equipe Tech Dry, a lightweight blend of cotton polyester and spandex that shapes the body without clinging to the skin, both events showed how confident and comfortable the participants were during the activities. Despite the demanding body movements, participants remained well composed and very confident.

Tech Dry fabric allows its wearer to stay cool, dry and comfortable. This latest fabric technology is used in both men's and women's clothing lines and is stylishly incorporated into fashionable designs.

Clothes that give confidence despite strenuous activities should not compromise the comfort benefit and the stylish design.

With the most advanced technology in fabric, superior quality can also be expected from Equipe's newest line of apparel.

Equipe sportswear is exclusively available at Toby's Sports. They come in sleek and modern designs in an array of striking colors.

Toby's Sports Arena is on the third floor of Glorietta 2 Ayala Center, Makati.

Asian autism conference Aug. 12-13

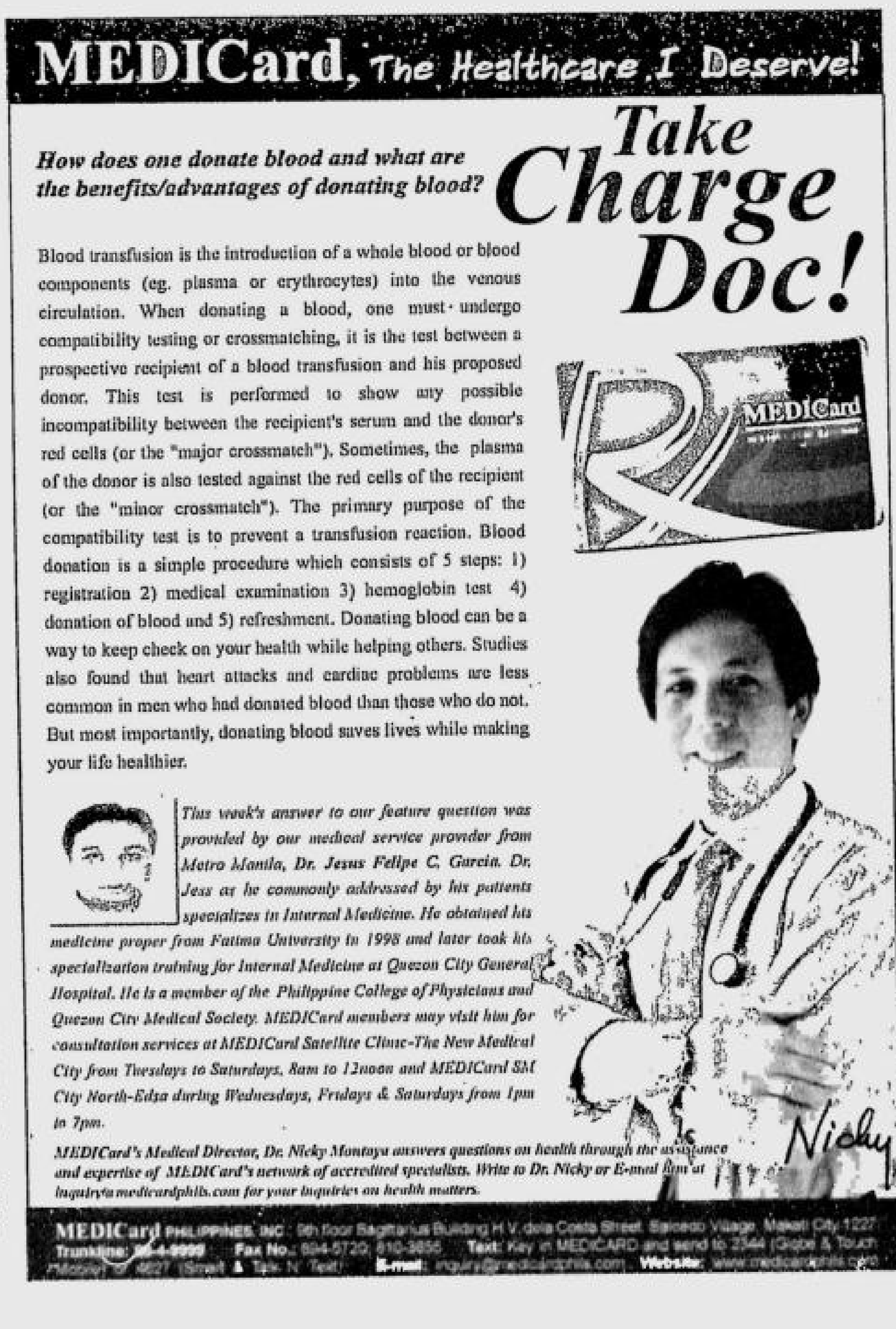
FIND OUT WHAT leading specialists in the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from the United States have to say at the Asian Autism Conference 2006, slated Aug. 12-13 at the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, Aberdeen, HK.

All involved in the care of autistic children, including parents and medical practitioners, are invited to attend. Fee per person is HKD1,000, including lunch. Group discounts are available.

For medical practitioners, a breakout training session is planned during the conference. Also in the plan is an instructional workshop on gut issues found in children with ASD.

Resource persons will include specialists in autism treatment and research from leading institutions such as Harvard Medical School.

For more information, including how to register, log on to www.conference.autismpnhk.org.



MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

How does one donate blood and what are the benefits/advantages of donating blood?

Blood transfusion is the introduction of a whole blood or blood components (eg. plasma or erythrocytes) into the venous circulation. When donating a blood, one must undergo compatibility testing or crossmatching, it is the test between a prospective recipient of a blood transfusion and his proposed donor. This test is performed to show any possible incompatibility between the recipient's serum and the donor's red cells (or the "major crossmatch"). Sometimes, the plasma of the donor is also tested against the red cells of the recipient (or the "minor crossmatch"). The primary purpose of the compatibility test is to prevent a transfusion reaction. Blood donation is a simple procedure which consists of 5 steps: 1) registration 2) medical examination 3) hemoglobin test 4) donation of blood and 5) refreshment. Donating blood can be a way to keep check on your health while helping others. Studies also found that heart attacks and cardiac problems are less common in men who had donated blood than those who do not. But most importantly, donating blood saves lives while making your life healthier.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Metro Manila, Dr. Jesus Felipe C. Garcia. Dr. Jess as he commonly addressed by his patients specializes in Internal Medicine. He obtained his medicine proper from Fatima University in 1998 and later took his specialization training for Internal Medicine at Quezon City General Hospital. He is a member of the Philippine College of Physicians and Quezon City Medical Society. MEDICard members may visit him for consultation services at MEDICard Satellite Clinic-The New Medical City from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8am to 12noon and MEDICard SM City North-Edsa during Wednesdays, Fridays & Saturdays from 1pm to 7pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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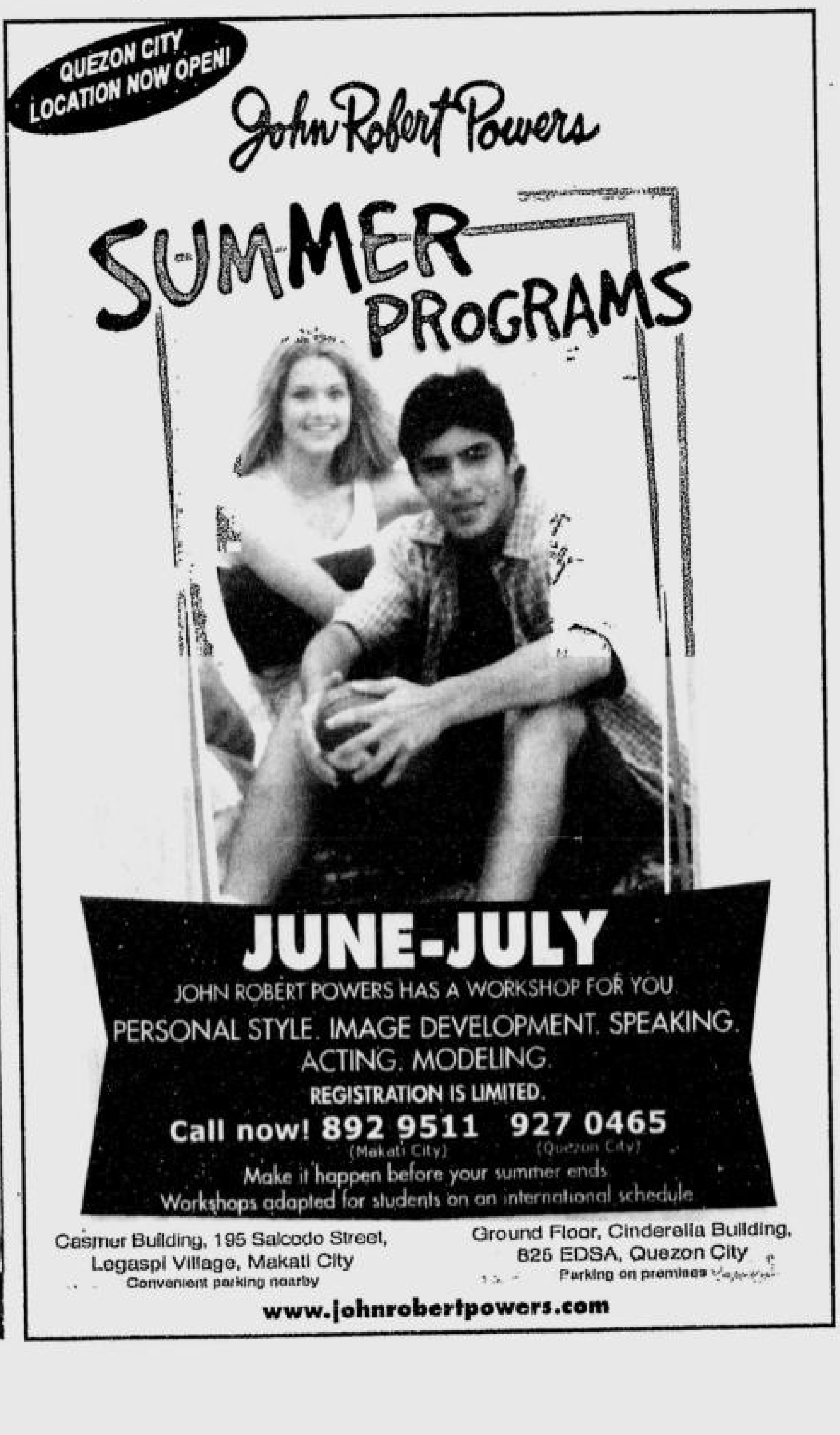
Trunkline: [illegible] Fax No.: [illegible] Text: Key in MEDICARD and send to 2344 (Globe & Touch [illegible]
E-mail: [illegible] Website: [illegible]



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DITAS Taleon of Robinsons-Iloilo, and Tommy Lee O., Joseph Sian, and Minda Carpio of Robinsons Land Corp.

GERARD Caram II and Mario Pamplona of Maybank

NACHO Ortigas, Precy Florentino and Marga Ortigas

MADAME Martine Vardakis, Consul Fortune Ledesma of Monaco and son RJ Ledesma.

Lucky colors for HK kitchen

ILOILO dancing queens Susie Facultad and Susan Wong

EMMA Nava and ABS-CBN-Iloilo's Oscarito Nava

FATHER Lozada of Jordan, Guimaras, Doña Erlinda Jalandoni Salvador, Victoria Salvador Sanson and Fr. Roy Panes

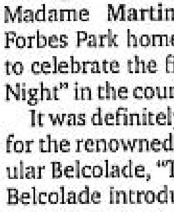
PRESS People at the Hong Kong Kitchen opening: **Maricar Calubiran, Lydia Pendon, Bert Lader, Lester Mark Carnaje, Perla Lina, Lucy Montealto, Rhoda Oliveros, and David Suarez of Panay News**

RICHIE Ross, Edgar Sia of Mang Inasal, Suzanne Yap and Ted Magalona

MA. ANITA and Ben So with their children

AT ILOILO'S Hong Kong Kitchen: Ben Salvador, Regina Francisco, Eugene Chua, Charlie Uy, Kelly Boncan and Benjie Salvador

Belcolade
THE REAL BE N CHOCO
PETER Deriemaeker, global sales director of Puratos Group, Belgium Ambassador Gregoire Vardakis, "Cyrano," Daniel Malcorps, CEO of Puratos Group, and Bernard Poplimont, GM of Puratos Phils.


WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

I JETTED IN VIA CEBU PACIFIC (IT WAS ON time, at last) to be one of the guests of honor at the hard-to-beat, already-so-popular Hong Kong Kitchen, which opened with a big bang at one of the country's favorite malls, Robinsons Place Iloilo, *natch*!

As expected, *moi* noticed tons of Iloilo society who's-who, business heavyweights, and political biggies, *palanggas*.

The fab owners, *el muy simpatico*, witty and brilliant **Ben Salvador** and *tres charmant* **Eugene Chua** of Cosmo Manille's well-known Gloria Maris, and the former's business-minded sons **Benjie** and **Joey**, brought in chefs from Hong Kong and Shanghai for the grand opening.

The gifted and super-talented duo prepared mouthwatering, to-die-for authentic Chinese dishes. There were 10 awesome dishes for lunch and another 10 for dinner. Believe me, *palanggas*, all of them could rival cuisines from the best restaurants in Hong Kong, Shanghai or Cosmo Manille.

Doing the ribbon-snipping was the honorable Vice Mayor of Metro Iloilo, **Guillermo de la Llana**; media and banking magnate Dr. **Roger Florete**; **Tommy Lee O.**, and the vivaciously adorable French-speaking **Minda Carpio**, no less, vice president for complex administration.

The interiors of Hong Kong Kitchen were done in scarlet, tangerine and gold, feng shui's lucky colors for this year! With its ceiling-to-floor glass windows, one can have a good view of the mall's popular Fountain Area. Red lanterns adorn the restaurant, while tables and chairs are done in black wood. The best part is that, after mall hours, one can still use the side entrance door on the Ledesma Wing of the mall, which has been beautifully re-landscaped by Robinsons' lady of substance, brilliant **Ditas Taleon**, *palanggas*.

Seen at the affair were popular restaurateur of the renowned Marinas Restaurant **Ross Gorriceta** and his daughter, **Rochell Gorriceta-Salvador**; businessman **Larry Gorriceta**; entrepreneur **Bobby Braga** and his wife, gorgeous New York City gal **Pangging Rosales**, who came with her pretty-as-a-photo daughter, **Breann**, and Pangging R's pals, former Mr. Philippines **Erwin Chiongson** and choreographer **Bobby Jarder**; Bacolod's arbiter of good taste, **Edouard Garcia**, who crossed the Iloilo Channel from Sugarlandia also to snip the ceremonial ribbon; businessman **Oscar Nava**; businesswoman **Fanny Uy** and her famille; Iloilo's top eventologist **Nonoy Ybiernas**; coosome twosome **Ted and Marichel Magalona**; and the city's most popular society columnist, **John B. Castigador** of Panay News, plus so many other faces enjoying the excellent food, the superb ambience, and each other's company.

Moi also noticed a nobody trying hard to be a somebody who, I was told, "came in for a free lunch." Oops. Well, as for *moi*, I concentrated on the roast duck, the bean curd and noodles, and the lemon chicken, which had me forgetting my strict diet again!

Days after the fab inaugural, I noticed there was a steady line of gourmands coming in and out of Hong Kong Kitchen. Hey, if that ain't a good sign of success, then I don't know what is, *palanggas*.

Show and business

It may sound unreal, but it did happen, and if *moi* may say so, in a very successful way, *palanggas*.

Show biz and the gaming world got together one evening when the renowned Elixir Group Ltd. of Macao, the exclusive distributor of Stargames Corp. Pty. Ltd. (manufacturers of gaming technology), sponsored the performance of Bahaghari Productions' smashing success "We're Still Hot," the fab musical comedy starring stage actresses and singers **Pinky Marquez, Shamaine Centenera Buencamino, Lyn Sherman** and **Nina Romualdez.**

Elixir's hotshot honcho **Gordon Yuen** and his wife **Lolita** jetted in from Macao to meet all the guests at cocktails after the super show.

Just like the show, Macao has now become one of the world's hottest destinations, and the merger of these two giants in the world of entertainment and casinos is a landmark move.

Well, needless to say, dahlings, this occasion drew in our town's A-list crowd.

Sweet afternoon

It was the sweetest afternoon anyone could ask for when the chic diplo set, top restaurateurs, hoteliers and hotshot personalities gathered to pay tribute to what else but the sweetest indulgence on earth—chocolate!

The honorable ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium, **Gregoire Vardakis**, and his wife, Madame **Martine V.**, welcomed to their Forbes Park home some 200 excited invitees to celebrate the first-ever "Belgian Chocolate Night" in the country.

It was definitely a sweet moment, dahlings, for the renowned Puratos, makers of the popular Belcolade, "The Real Belgian Chocolate." Belcolade introduced its new "Origin Collection" that evening. It's the only Belgian company producing chocolate for Godiva and Leonidas!

But the best part was the unveiling of—take note—a grand, awesome chocolate buffet superbly prepared by Belcolade Chocolatier chef **Stef Aerts**, who jetted in from Belgium just three days before this happening, a dream-come-true for any sweet-toothed lover.

Hey, who doesn't drool over chocolate, huh? Fun and witty **RJ Ledesma** hosted the program, which began with a dignified Ambassador Vardakis giving a short welcome message, followed by **Daniel Malcorps**, hot CEO of the Puratos Group, and good-looking **Bernard Poplimont**, general manager of Puratos Philippines, saying their speeches in English and ending them in Tagalog, to the absolute delight of the choco crowd, dahlings.

Showing his gratitude to the Belgium Ambassador, **Peter Deriemaeker**, hotshot global sales director of Puratos Group, presented a baker statuette and a shirt with a message on chocolate as an "aphrodisiac," which drew loud applause and laughter from the crowd.

When the chocolate buffet was unveiled, many invitees couldn't wait to get the first bite from the endless choices of chocolate concoctions on the long table.

It was great fun and definitely a night of three big C's—cocktails, classical music and, *naturellement*, tons of chocolates!

Contact Puratos Philippines at 8385110 to 15, or visit www.puratos.com.

AMBASSADOR Tonette Lagdameo, Albert Young, stage actress Nina Romualdez, Lolita Yuen and hubby Gordon Yuen of Elixir, Mayor Lito Atienza, lawyer Lorna Kapunan, Carmita Francisco, and Margie Moran Floirendo

SOCIETY gals Conchita Simo Toda and Nikki Prieto Teodoro

"WE'RE Still Hot" finale was a blockbuster with the stars showing off their 24-karat assets.

FRANCES Lim, Gordon Yuen, Jun Tambunting and Nancy Carlos Tambunting

MARISSA Rocha, with pals Vicky Soriano and Isabel Araneta